

Faith of Steel



**A history of the Christian Churches
in Illawarra, Australia.**

Stuart Peggitt

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Front Cover:

Mary, Queen of Croats, Croatian Catholic Church, Figtree

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A HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN
ILLAWARRA, AUSTRALIA

by

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1834 - 1984

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1984

Stuart Piggin 1984

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TO

ERIC MORTLEY

Pastor Pastorum

Life seems more sweet that thou dost live
And men more true that thou art one.
Nothing is lost that thou dost give,
Nothing destroy'd that thou hast done.

Anne Brontë

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I wish to thank my students in the 1983 Religious History seminar, all of whom wrote a history of a local congregation. I have included their names on the title page of this book, together with those of Phyllis Tibbs, Susan Radkovic (nee Westwood), Father Miltiades Chrysavgis, and Bryce Fraser, on whose writings I have depended heavily. As I wrote, Phyllis continued to supplement her earlier work, and some of the more satisfactory parts of this book are due to her research.

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Margaret Lamb went much further than the extra kilometre in chasing up leads. I would never have made it without her help and her prayers.

Stuart Figgitt

TABLES OF EVENTS

To avoid over-burdening the text with details, I have given a table of events before each chapter. Events are listed in the year in which they occurred, according to the following arrangement:

- (1) Australian secular
- (2) Illawarra secular
- (3) Australian denominational
- (4) Illawarra denominational.

In (3) and (4) denominations are listed in the following order: Church of England, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Salvation Army, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Reformed, Orthodox, and Pentecostal. Where known to me the precise date of an event is given so that the interested reader can check for further details of the event in the local press (*Illawarra Mercury* or *South Coast Times*) a day or two later. I would be glad to be informed of errors and omissions in these tables.

ABBREVIATIONS

C of E	Church of England
<i>IHSB</i>	<i>Illawarra Historical Society Bulletin</i>
<i>IM</i>	<i>Illawarra Mercury</i>
RC	Catholic, Roman Catholic
<i>SCT</i>	<i>South Coast Times</i>
<i>SMH</i>	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>



INTRODUCTION

This history of the Christian churches in Illawarra – Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox – covers the period from the beginning of settlement to the present day. It has been researched, written, and printed in just over a year. Jérôme would have called it *temerarium opus*; a rush job. Its findings are therefore tentative, and its conclusions provisional. It is more illustrative than analytical, and it abounds in case studies.

Nevertheless, I have tried to be as conceptual and explanatory as constraints permitted. To my knowledge this is the first regional study ever written of all Christian denominations covering almost 200 years of Australian history. I was conscious that I was breaking new ground, and spent a lot of my short time developing a method by which to make some sense of a vast volume of source material. Basically, I took as my fundamental question, "Why were churches built in Illawarra and what has attending them done to and for their members and for the community in which they live?" Throughout all Church history Christians have perceived, with the intuition of faith, that it is primarily through the regular worship of God that they find both the energy to order their world and the meaning which they attach to their world. What sort of world, then, has the Christian Church helped to fashion in this region, and what meaning has the Church given to life here?

All other questions I made subsidiary to that question. Since different denominations of Christians have sometimes answered that question differently, the Illawarra churches have been studied within the context of the Australian experience of the denominations to which they belonged. Since the number and aspirations of people available in a region to practise churchgoing depend largely on the economy, the Illawarra churches have been placed in their socio-economic context. Apart from these major issues of denominationalism and socio-economic development, which feature in each chapter, other concerns of the churches have been discussed intermittently: education, the state, social class, trade unions, strikes, wars, disasters, revivals, missions, drink, women, social welfare, to mention but some.

Since this history is written primarily for Illawarra churchgoers, accounts are given of the building of some of the more important (and indeed some of the most humble) ecclesiastical edifices in the

region. Some of the more important and most humble ecclesiastical personages - clerical and lay - also crowd these pages.

The history has been divided into three periods, corresponding to the three industries which have successively dominated the region: the pastoral, mining and steel industries. Illawarra is defined as that region south of Sydney, bounded by the towns of Helensburgh in the north and Nowra in the south, the Pacific Ocean to the east and the escarpment of the Illawarra Range to the west.

Since all historical writing is subjective, and Church history more subjective than most, it is well that I should make plain my own stance. I am a friend of the cause, a communicant member of All Saints Anglican Church, Figtree. This fact will help to explain my defective knowledge of other denominations. My insensitivity to them is due to ignorance, however, not want of appreciation.

Illawarra Christianity has been predominantly conservative, but it is not thereby deficient in interest. I had no idea twelve months ago that I would discover so much to fascinate and inspire, to enrich and instruct. Nevertheless, the title of this book is more striking than accurate: the faith of Illawarra Christians, as we shall see, has frequently fallen far short of the quality of steel. I have tried to give a more balanced view of the highs and lows in the narrative than I have managed to convey in the title. For, while this history is written for Wollongong's Sesquicentenary, it is not intended to be a celebratory history. Like us, our fathers have been all too successful in leaving undone those things which they ought to have done and in doing those things which they ought not to have done. I hope this history will help us to understand their mistakes, so that we shall make our own and not repeat theirs.

PART I

**THE PASTORAL AGE:
THE UNEASY ANGLICAN ASCENDENCY**

CHAPTER ONE
CEDAR, CATTLE, CONVICTS, AND CHAPLAINS
1788 – 1833

TABLE OF EVENTS

1788 – 1833

1788

First fleet arrived in Sydney Cove. Arthur Phillip, Governor; Richard Johnson, Chaplain.

1794

Samuel Marsden appointed Assistant Chaplain.

1803

James Dixon, Catholic priest who had been transported for sedition, acted as Chaplain when emancipated.

1810

Major General Lachlan Macquarie appointed Governor; Marsden appointed Senior Chaplain.

1812

First Methodist class meeting held in N.S.W.

1815

Charles Throsby explored Illawarra for grazing land - erected a stock-yard near where St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral now stands, Rev. Samuel Leigh, first Wesleyan Methodist minister, arrived in Sydney.

1820

Fathers Therry and Conolly arrived in New South Wales - salaried Roman Catholic chaplains.

Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of Australia formed.

1822

Charles Throsby Smith settled on 300 acres, now occupied by the City of Wollongong.

1823

John Dunmore Lang, first Presbyterian minister, arrived in New South Wales.

1823

Australia and Van Diemen's Land incorporated into the Diocese of Calcutta, formed in 1814.

1824

*Archdeaconry of New South Wales established:
Thomas Hobbes Scott, first Archdeacon.*

Rev. Thomas Reddall appointed Director-General of all government schools.

1826

Soldiers of the 40th Regiment under Captain Bishop sent to Mawarra by Governor Darling - established a military establishment at Fort Kembla - barracks moved to Wollongong in 1830. Bishop and C.T. Smith authorised to conduct religious services.

Church and Schools Corporation established.

1827

Rev. Thomas Kendall granted land in Mawarra and performed baptisms and burials up to 1831.

1828

Census - 334 people living in Mawarra district.

6 Cedar, Cattle, Convicts, and Chaplains

1829

Five towns gazetted in Illawarra: Five Islands (Wollongong), Kiama, Gerringong, Coolangatta, and Ulladulla.

1831

17 July - Rev. Thomas Reddall, Church of England Chaplain at Campbelltown, visited Wollongong and conducted divine service at the military barracks for 60 people.

Catholic Parish of Campbelltown established.

1832

New South Wales Presbytery formed.

1833

Military replaced by mounted police and Francis Allman became resident magistrate.

Dissolution of Church and Schools Corporation.

William Ullathorne appointed Roman Catholic Vicar-General.

2 October - Rev. Frederick Wilkinson (Church of England) appointed Chaplain to Illawarra.

17 April - Father Therry conducted first Catholic Mass in Wollongong.

In the beginning God created the bush. In the garden of Eden, He walked with Adam in the cool of the day. In the garden of Illawarra, He exercised more robustly. He ran with his aboriginal children down the steep slopes of Mounts Keira and Kembla, along the escarpment adorned exotically with red cedars, bangalow and cabbage-tree palms, the lillipilly, grey myrtle, sassafras, and casuarina, under the stagshorn fern and the wing of the crimson rosella, and along the banks of numerous creeks which sang in harmony with the bell-bird. Together they tumbled down the escarpment and then meandered through the wooded grasslands of the coastal plain, until, having traversed incomparable yellow beaches, they plunged in joyful abandon into the blue of the Pacific Ocean.



Eugen von Guérard, sketch of Wellington and Mt. Kempls, 1859. Original in Dixon Library, Sydney.

And God said that it was good. His faithful servant, Eugen von Guérard, artist of the German Romantic school, agreed. 'The land is a metaphor for the majesty of God', he declared as, in meticulous detail, he painted in 1860 the rainforest of Mt. Kempls, marvelling at its sublimity, grandeur, danger and mystery.



American Creek, Mt. Kambbla, 1871.

Another of God's faithful servants, Gerard D'Arcy-Irvine, Anglican rector of Wollongong, destined to preach at Henry Lawson's funeral, celebrated the beauties of the Illawarra in verse:

ILLAWARRA: A SONNET

O ILLAWARRA! dowered with lavish hand,
Thy fadeless glories be it mine to sing:
For thou art beautiful in everything
Between the sheltering range and sea-washed sand.
And all thy mountains, shores, and fruitful land:
Thy palms and ferns and flame-trees blossoming:
Thine islands five, that midst the breakers stand;
Thy hemispheric lake, whose wooded islands ring
With the wild magpies' notes of mellow sound -
These all unite in one harmonious song:
They all sing praise to God the whole year round.
Their voice is heard amid the heavenly throng,
While hearts of men attuned the strain prolong.
Ah, glad see they who such fair scenes have found.

(G.A. D'Arcy-Irvine, *Poems*, 1921, p.63.)

1. WHITE SETTLEMENT

A garden of paradise, but never, after the coming of the white man, a social Eden, let alone a spiritual Elysium. The early free colonists of Australia 'for the most part quitted their native country principally intent on the acquisition of wealth', and wealth, not beauty, was the principal attraction of Illawarra. Nevertheless, quick wealth was not easily won in Illawarra. Though close to the original settlement of Sydney, it was inaccessible, cut off by the escarpment to the north and west, and, with the relatively poor harbours, access by sea was restricted. The best grazing land was limited in acreage and, between 1817 and 1831, swiftly alienated in land grants to wealthy settlers whose monopoly slowed population growth.

The first whites to inhabit Illawarra were cedargetters, a seedy collection of escaped convicts, the indebted, and free men down on their luck. They began to take cedar from the district in 1810. It fetched from 10 pence to 1 shilling and two pence a foot in Sydney, to which it was taken normally on small vessels which berthed at Wollongong harbour and exchanged a cargo of rum, the Colony's chief currency, for the precious timber.

The second industry, which attracted a resident population of free settlers and their convict labourers, was cattle grazing. Between 1817 and 1821 Governor Lachlan Macquarie, who in a despatch to the Colonial Office had referred to 'that part of the Colony known as Five Islands but called 'Illawarra' by the natives', promised land grants to over thirty settlers. It was not until 1822, however, when Charles Throsby Smith occupied his 300-acre grant, the site of modern-day Wollongong, that permanent settlement began.



Cabbage Tree Forest, Illawarra, by Augustus Easle.

First Census

According to the 1828 Census there were only 334 white people living in Illawarra, occupying settlements along one hundred miles of coastland. It was a man's world. 228 or just over 68% were adult males. Fifty (or under 15%) were adult females of whom 16 were unmarried, and 56 were children. Those of convict origin comprised just under 25% of the population.

Such a sparsely-populated, unbalanced, and tainted population was an unpromising foundation on which to build churches. Nevertheless, the Christian religion was brought first to Illawarra by those settlers, some of whom were soon to complain of spiritual neglect and to demand access to the means of grace.

2. THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN NSW

Of the population of Illawarra in 1828, 42% were members of the Church of England. Brought to Australia with the First Fleet, the Church of England was part of the apparatus of Government. It was assumed by the Colonial Office that the Church of England would be the Established Church in the Colony, just as it had been in England since the 6th Century A.D. Governor Arthur Phillip was instructed to 'enforce a due observance of religion and ... take such steps for the due celebration of publick worship as circumstances will permit.' Circumstances did not permit as frequently as Phillip's chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson, would have wished, and tension between church and State in Australia may be dated back to the first Sunday of white settlement when Phillip decreed that the infant colony was too pressed to take time off for public worship.

More specifically, the Church of England in Australia was at first part of the Military Establishment. From 1786, when the Rev. Richard Johnson was appointed, until 1823, when Australia was incorporated by Letters Patent into the Diocese of Calcutta, the Church of England was a military chaplaincy to a convict settlement. Church of England chaplains were appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies until the appointment of the first Bishop in 1836 and were bound to obey their 'superior officer', namely the Governor, 'according to the rules and discipline of war'.

Invested with military and establishment status, the Church of England was also assumed to be responsible for education. When instructing school children proved too onerous for already over-worked chaplains, Governor King (1800 - 1806) appointed lay catechists to teach school during the week and to read religious services on Sundays in the absence of a priest. From 1824 until 1826 the Rev. Thomas Reddall, Chaplain at Campbelltown from 1821, was director-general of all Government Schools. In 1825 Australia's first Archdeacon, T.H. Scott, was appointed 'Visitor' to all schools maintained throughout the Colony by His Majesty's Revenue. One-seventh of the land of the Colony was vested in the Church and Schools Corporation, a Church of England monopoly, to finance the education system.

In spite of all these privileges, the Church of England suffered chronic weakness in the first third of the nineteenth century. Samuel Marsden, most prominent of the first generation of chaplains, in commenting on his first thirty years in the Colony (1795-1825), described New South Wales as 'the most abandoned Society ... under the Government of the greatest Enemies to the Gospel'. It was not that successive governors were atheists: it was just that they were less interested in the truth of religion than in its usefulness: its capacity to 'moralise the heart', instill obedience, and dispel ignorance. Governors were drawn from the English ruling classes who tended in the eighteenth century to adopt an



Samuel Marsden

easy-going tolerance of all religious claims, a position known as 'latitudinarianism', and to identify religion with morality. Chaplains, on the other hand, tended to be products of the Evangelical Revival with its insistence on 'vital' or 'real religion', an experience of a changed life known as conversion, and a conviction that peace with God had been won, not through moral effort, but through the death of Christ with its atonement for sin.

the planting of the Church of England in Australia was therefore the tail end of a mighty spiritual movement. Richard Johnson and Samuel Marsden, for example, had both been pupils of Joseph Milner, master of Hull Grammar School, author of *The History of the Church of Christ*, possibly the most influential history of the church written since the Acts of the Apostles and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. Milner's brother, Isaac, was the human instrument in the conversion of William Wilberforce who, together with a group of prominent London citizens known as 'the Clapham Sect', was instrumental in the abolition of the slave trade, in the formation in 1799 of the Church Missionary Society, and in sending Evangelical chaplains all over the British Empire. It is a mark of the vigilance and zeal of this group, that Richard Johnson was appointed chaplain of the First Fleet before Arthur Phillip received his appointment. As we shall see, though there was much to regret in the lives of the pioneers of Christianity in Illawarra, they were not without lofty aspirations inherited from the Evangelical Revival.

3. THE FOUNDATION OF CATHOLICISM IN NSW

Returning to the 1828 Census, 42% of the Illawarra population were Catholics - that is, the number of Catholics was identical to the number of Anglicans. This Catholic percentage is above the national average for 1828 of 31% (J. Waldersee, *Catholic Society in New South Wales*, 1974, p.76) and reflects the tendency of Irish Catholics to settle to the south of Sydney, whereas Protestants, especially non-Anglicans, preferred the plains north of Sydney which were opened earlier to settlement. Catholicism in Illawarra retains to this day its relative strength. Its prominence, however, has been obscured by the clannishness and humble social origins of most nineteenth-century Irish Catholics and by their quiet acceptance of Catholic traditions rather than devotional fervour. Catholic clergy, too, have been happy to confine their labours to the faithful: few have been like that unstable hero of early Catholicism, Jeremiah O'Flynn, who won converts from Protestantism by promising that his prayers for the healing of their bodily ailments would be heard only if they became Catholics, and who in 1818 was deported by an incredulous Macquarie.

It took Catholic clergy a generation to win governmental endorsement. In 1787 two Catholic priests had offered to sail with

the First Fleet, motivated by 'sincere pity' for the 300 Catholic convicts, 'ignorant ... of every principle of duty to God and man'. This offer was turned down, although the colonial office did not disagree with the priests when they argued of their prospective charges that 'these people will not pay the attention to other ministers which they do to their own'.

Repeatedly, Catholics petitioned successive governors for their own clergy. They were anxious about 'going into eternity without the assistance of a Catholic priest'; they 'felt uneasy at being excluded from exercising their religion'. Generally, they exhibited such symptoms of insecurity that they constituted a security risk for the government. Hence, in 1803, Governor King allowed an emancipated priest, J. Dixon, to perform priestly duties monthly. It was a cautious beginning, and the experiment was terminated the next year following a rebellion at Castle Hill which the Governor blamed on the Irish.

Little more was done for over a decade. At the Vatican, Australia, as a missionary area without a hierarchy, was the administrative responsibility of the Sacred Congregation of the Faith (Propaganda) established in Rome in 1622. The Catholic Church in Europe was until 1815 preoccupied with the Napoleonic Wars which suffices to explain its lack of concern for a tiny colony on the other side of the world. Yet the Catholic Church would shortly enjoy spiritual revival which created a missionary enthusiasm comparable to that engendered among Protestants by the Evangelical Revival some eighty years earlier. Early Australian Catholic clergy were a colourful and controversial band, but their appetite for missionary and pastoral work was very healthy.

Finally in 1820 the Catholics of New South Wales were allowed their own priests. Phillip Conolly and Joseph Therry, destined to be the first priest to say Mass in Illawarra, were put on the government pay-roll, receiving half the stipend of Church of England chaplains. In 1821 the foundation stone of St. Mary's chapel, Sydney, was laid by the governor himself. In 1825 Therry proposed the establishment of a Roman Catholic Education Society to keep Catholic children out of the clutches of Archdeacon Scott's Church and Schools Corporation.

Governor Darling terminated Therry's appointment in 1826,

considering him a trouble-maker, but Therry continued to serve as priest without payment. In fact, between 1820 when there were about 6,000 Catholics in the colony and 1833 when he was put back on the government pay-roll as the Catholic population topped 16,000, Therry was usually the sole priest.

Of a factious temperament, Therry's integrity was nevertheless above question. In his student days in Ireland he had devoted himself to missionary service, and his subsequent career was one of great-hearted apostolic endeavour against appalling odds. Though never knocked out, he was frequently knocked down by overwork: seven priests could not have achieved what he attempted. Yet, not being given to self-congratulation, this was no consolation to him, and he was always distressed that so many Catholics were dying in distant settlements without benefit of the sacraments and that so few attended communion, even when celebrated, because there were insufficient priests to hear confession.

There could be no question among early Catholics of relaxing standards to meet a pioneering situation: laymen could not stand in for priests; confession before communion could not be abolished; churches had to be big and generously appointed to symbolise the glory of God. Irish Catholicism was a fighting, uncompromising religion and from its inception in Illawarra it suited the temperament of battling Irish settlers. It was also an expensive religion, and it was as well that most of the Illawarra faithful were generous, and a few, like Cornelius O'Brien, very wealthy.



John Joseph Therry.

4. THE COMING OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TO ILLAWARRA

The Church of England came to Illawarra, as it came to New South Wales, as part of a military establishment. In 1826 Captain Peter Bishop, who had fought at Waterloo, and a detachment of thirty soldiers from the 40th Regiment, were sent to Illawarra to protect settlers from 'bushrangers and vagabonds'. No chaplain was attached to the troop, but Captain Bishop and Charles Throsby Smith, who was awarded the contract to supply food to the soldiers, were authorised to conduct religious services. Hence, the regimental barracks, located first at Port Kembla, and from 1830 at Wollongong, was probably the first building in which Divine Service was held in Illawarra.

The first ordained minister of the Church of England located in Illawarra was Thomas Kendall, who on 19 October 1827 purchased an estate of 500 acres just south of Kiama and on 6 December 1827 was authorised to select 1280 acres of cedar country further south at Ulladulla. In his application for this land, he said he desired to settle in an area without a resident clergyman, so that he could act in that capacity if authorised by Archdeacon Scott. The Archdeacon referred the matter to senior chaplain, Samuel Marsden, who recommended that a tight rein be kept on Kendall in view of his past, which was one of undoubted achievement marred by spectacular failure.

A Lincolnshire farmer's son, Thomas Kendall (1778-1832) arrived in New South Wales in 1813 as a lay missionary with the Church Missionary Society and, the following year, began missionary work in New Zealand at Marsden's request. He returned to England in 1820 where he was ordained priest and published the *Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand*. Missionaries are often accused of undermining indigenous cultures, but Kendall's downfall resulted from over-identification with the Maoris. Returning to New Zealand he became fascinated by Maori mythology, sold the Maoris guns to defend themselves, adored their women, and lived with his maid-servant in preference to his wife, Abraham and David had done similar things, he said in his defence, adding that he had never lusted after a white woman. Forsaken by his fellow missionaries and white settlers and dismissed by the Church Missionary Society, he was not able to sustain his tryst with Maori culture.

His conscience took terrible revenge on him, and he never recovered his peace of mind.

In Illawarra this 'sinning saint' retained his life-long ambition of promoting 'the extension of the Kingdom of Christ' to the 'utmost' of his power, but his power was enfeebled by a conscience that could not be quietened and he sought solace in drink. Sadly, but probably wisely, Archdeacon Scott authorised Kendall to perform 'surplice duties' only: baptisms and burials. His diary is, accordingly, Illawarra's first service register, with entries on five baptisms and two burials between 1827 and 1831.

He and all hands of the cutter *Brisbane* were drowned in 1832 when the boat foundered off Jervis Bay. Five years later, his most celebrated grandson, the poet, Henry Kendall, was born. But his greatest gift to the cause of Christ's kingdom in Illawarra was his own son, Thomas Surfleet Kendall, destined to become churchwarden of the Kiama Anglican church, an exemplary circuit steward in the Kiama Methodist church, and a highly respected magistrate. (On T. Kendall, see Judith Binney, *The Legacy of Guilt*, 1968.)

The first service of divine worship recorded in Illawarra was taken at the military barracks on 17 July 1831 by an Oxford graduate, the Rev. Thomas Reddall (1780-1838), chaplain at Campbelltown. Sixty people attended, and five children were baptised. A report on the service in the *Sydney Gazette* for 28 July 1831 conveyed the anxiety of residents for a more settled ministry in this 'hitherto neglected district' and expressed the hope that, pending the appointment of a resident clergyman, Mr. Reddall would 'devote at least one Sabbath every three months' to Illawarra. Whilst in Wollongong on his first visit, Reddall explored the possibility of building a chapel with a school room and burial ground attached. Henry Osborne, who had arrived in the Colony in 1829 from County Tyrone, Ireland, and was given a grant of 2,560 acres which he called Marshall Mount, promised twenty pounds and twenty acres of land near Dapto Creek for the purpose. This offer was refused, however, as Wollongong was then considered a more desirable site, and nothing further was done.

Scandalised by the neglect of their spiritual needs, some Illawarra residents vehemently demanded action. A correspondent to the

Sydney Gazette for 8 September 1832 painted a grim picture of the religious scene in a series of 'Questions and Answers':

Surely you have a Clergyman or a Catechist?

No - never!!

You have a church building?

No - there was some little talk of it six months ago, but it dropped!

You have a piece of ground consecrated to bury the dead?

No - those who die in the Illawarra have the peculiar advantage of resting their bones under any tree, or in any swamp!!

In the absence of a Clergyman, who christens the children born at Illawarra?

They are never christened, that ceremony is dispensed with here.

Have you never had a visit from the Venerable the Archdeacon?

No; and strange to say he has visited every other district in the colony.

Perhaps stung by this outburst, Archdeacon Broughton in February 1833 appointed a catechist to Illawarra, John Layton, responsible to the Church and Schools Corporation and to Reddall. 'We can't refrain from expressing dislike to these sort of gentlemen as a substitute for a clergyman', grumbled the *Sydney Gazette* correspondent (12 March 1833). Yet in eight months Layton achieved much. He rented from C.T. Smith for 40 pounds annually a crude cottage and a barn which he used as a church and school. The Church and Schools Corporation approved the expenditure of 87 pounds 12 shillings and 5 pence in fitting out the barn. Layton visited the scattered settlers, inviting them to attend services at Wollongong or Dapto and to send their children to his school. He kept a register of the births, marriages, and deaths of people of every religious denomination and was assisted in his school by David Sefton, a settler.

On 2 October 1833 the Rev. Frederick Wilkinson was appointed first Church of England chaplain to Illawarra. Within a fortnight of his arrival he was appointed to negotiate with the Governor for better roads (*SMH*, 16 October 1833), an indication of the settlers' understanding of the role of an Anglican clergyman in civic affairs. Layton departed, but Wilkinson continued to conduct services and school in Smith's barn. His vast charge stretched from Helensburgh in the north to the Shoalhaven in the south, and, every two months,

he took services at the Shoalhaven, including Ulladulla. The Church of England had come to stay.

5. THE COMING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TO ILLAWARRA

Catholicism came to Illawarra in the same year as Wilkinson's appointment. In 1833 the youthful, intelligent Benedictine, William Ullathorne, arrived in New South Wales as Vicar-General. Father Therry, he observed, 'is the most singular character I ever met'. Therry's submission to the Vicar-General's authority was total, but Ullathorne wisely appointed him to the district of Campbelltown, including Illawarra, where he could continue both as a law unto himself and his practice of great-hearted, if haphazard, exertion for Christ.

Therry repeatedly traversed his vast charge, full of missionary zeal and love for souls, baptising over 200 people in the year 1833 alone. He identified fiercely with his Irish compatriots, and they responded with loyalty and affection, a secure foundation for any church. It is therefore not surprising to learn that Therry was received enthusiastically by the comparatively large Catholic population on 17 April 1833 when, at the army barracks in Wollongong, he said the first mass in Illawarra, baptised five children, and solemnised two marriages. Thirty-one years later Archdeacon John McEncroe claimed to have celebrated the first mass on the South Coast. He gave the year as 1833, but no date. Probably it is now impossible to decide between the two claimants, but contemporary evidence exists only for Therry's activities.

There is some evidence that Therry conducted mass every few months in Smith's barn, and that the entire free population of the town attended whether divine service was conducted according to Anglican or Catholic rites, an interesting early ecumenism which has been repeated occasionally throughout the Illawarra's history.

Smith's Barn

Two eye-witness accounts of those early religious services in Smith's barn have survived. Young Martin Lynch who arrived in Illawarra in 1827 attended both church and school in the barn.

Located just south-east of the junction of Smith and Harbour Streets, near the present St. Mary's High School, the barn was described as 'a large building erected of hardwood slabs'. Nearby was the convict stockade where young Martin, peering through cracks in the slab fence, witnessed the flogging of the prisoners by 'black Waddel the flogger and Davie the flogger'. After each few strokes, the flogger would draw the cat tails through his fingers to remove the blood and flesh. The convicts were forced to attend divine service. According to Martin the convicts sat up the back, 'gaffing' with coins (colonial slang for gambling) during the prayers and sermon. Though inattentive to the sermon, Illawarra convicts took some notice of C.T. Smith's five daughters and, at the conclusion of the service, were rewarded by them with tobacco smuggled from the stores of Bustle Farm.

Another witness was the author, believed to be a Mr. Webster, of 'the Paulsgrove diary'. A free labourer, he worked during 1833 and 1834 for James Spearing on the Paulsgrove estate, now Kelrville. He thought little of Spearing, was not over enthusiastic about anything, and was clearly very lonely. The entries in his diary reveal the rigid class divisions in early colonial Australia: he despised the convicts below him and the monied land grantees above him. Two undated entries read:

Went to Woolongong Church. Mr. Wilkinson preached a capital sermon on scandalising, slandering, and interfering with our neighbour's affairs. Very suitable to the Illawarra gentry.

This day twelve months ago was at new church to the funeral sermon on poor mother; there respectable congregation and a large church, here convicts and a barn.

On 9 March 1834 he walked to church in the morning and reported 'a large congregation'. In the afternoon he walked to the beach, had a chat, and 'got home to the damned hole again a little after dark; sleepless night'. On 12 April, after 'the deuce of a breeze with Spearing', he left Paulsgrove 'with regret I ever went near the place'. In a year of hard work, Wilkinson's 'capital sermon' was the only thing which had given him any satisfaction (W.G. McDonald (ed.), *Earliest Illawarra*, 1966, p.49).

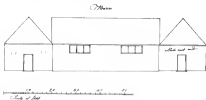
Amidst such unpromising scenes, the foundation of the Church was laid in Illawarra. Nevertheless, we can understand the sentiment



Archibald Campbell.

expressed in 1898 by Archibald Campbell, Illawarra Member of Parliament, editor of the *Illawarra Mercury*, and active member of Wollongong Congregational Church.

It was in this barn ... that the Gospel was first preached in Illawarra ... If ever a Cathedral should be erected in Illawarra the said spot should be the site of it, in National recognition of its being an sacred spot where the glad tidings of the Redeemer were first publicly preached under the Illawarra Ranges (*Illawarra Historical Society Bulletin*, June 1981, p.32).



Plans, dated 1833, for the renovation of Smith's barn as a schoolhouse and chapel. (Tracing - Original, Mitchell Library, Sydney)

CHAPTER 2

STATE-AIDED RELIGION

1834 – 1855

TABLE OF EVENTS

1834 - 1855

1834

- April* - Governor Bourke visited Wollongong.
- June* - John Bede Polding consecrated Catholic Bishop of Australia.
- July* - Surveyor-General Thomas Mitchell laid out Wollongong as a town - roads surveyed down Mt. Keira to Wollongong and from Bulli through Dapto to the Minnamurra River.

1835

The non-Anglican Protestants formed an Australian School Society for providing elementary schooling to children on a non-denominational, but Scriptural basis.

1836

- Population:* 1,297 Wollongong district;
1,312 Kiama district;
77,000 Australia
- 18 January* - W.G. Broughton appointed Church of England Bishop of Australia.
- Bourke's Church Act* - increased greatly the number of churches and clergy.
- First Baptist Church opened in New South Wales.*
- Catholic Church erected in Wollongong seated 250.*

1837

Church Temporalities Act - defined legal position of trustees and pewholders for the Church of England.

Bishop Polding visited Illawarra several times.

Rev. John Tait (Presbyterian) arrived in Wollongong from Scotland.

1838

Sir George Gipps appointed Governor.

Rev. M.D. Meares licensed as first Anglican rector of Wollongong and the Shoalhaven.

Father J. Rigney appointed to establish a Catholic mission in Illawarra.

First Catholic School opened in Wollongong.

Land given at West Dapto for a Catholic Church and Cemetery.

A wooden Catholic Church built at Dapto.

December - First known Wesleyan Methodist service led by John Vidler at Albion Park.

1839

Steam Packet Company established first regular steamship service between Sydney and Wollongong.

A Catholic school opened in Dapto - another at Jamberoo.

First Presbyterian Church opened at Wollongong.

A Wesleyan Society formed at Dapto by John Vidler.

1840

End of transportation of convicts to New South Wales.

14 October - Foundation stone laid for first Church of England Church, Wollongong

13 October - Foundation stone laid for St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Wollongong

Unanderra Catholic School opened.

Baptist Chapel opened at Wollongong

1841

Population: 4,875 in Mawarra

Presbyterian school/church Dapto opened.

1842

Drought in New South Wales.

Foundation of St Luke's Dapto (Church of England) laid.

Church of the Resurrection (Church of England), Jamberoo, opened.

Presbyterian school opened at Unanderra

Presbyterian school/church built at Jamberoo.

First Wesleyan Methodist Church, Wollongong, built in Keira Street.

1843

Church of England, Kiama, built.

Folding appointed Archbishop.

December - Caroline Chisholm accompanied 240 settlers to Mawarra.

Disruption in Scotland - creation of the Free Church of Scotland.

1846

Sir Charles Fitzroy appointed Governor.

Father Peter Young appointed to Wollongong.

First Wesleyan Methodist minister appointed to Mawarra (Rev. J. Thrum).

1847

Dual System of Education introduced: separate national and denominational schools.

First Anglican Church in use in Wollongong.

1848

Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School established, Wollongong.

Wesleyan Chapel opened at Dapto.

1849

James Shoober opened coal mine at Mt. Keira

St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Wollongong, completed

Catholic Church built at Nowra.

Wollongong became an independent Wesleyan circuit - previously Camden-Wollongong.

1850

Conference of five Anglican Bishops in Sydney - an autonomous national Church with powers for the laity envisaged.

Rev. Dr J.D. Lang formed a Synod of New South Wales (Presbyterian) disavowing State endowments and Establishment.

Australian Board of Missions inaugurated (Church of England).

Kiama made a separate parish (Church of England).

Foxground Church of England built.

Father Eugene Luckie (Catholic) appointed to Wollongong and formed St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society in Wollongong.

Shoalhaven made a separate Parish (Presbyterian in connection with the Established Church of Scotland).

1851

Gold Rushes.

Brick Presbyterian Church replaced wooden one at Dapto.

1852

Kiama Catholic Parish created.

1853

Kiama Steam Navigation Company formed.

Death of Bishop Broughton.

Father John Bede Sumner appointed to Wollongong.

Shoalhaven Presbyterian Parish formed (Free Church).

1854

Shellharbour - Terry's Meadow (Albion Park) Presbyterian Parish formed (Free Church)

Gerringong with Broughton Creek and Foxground became a separate Parish (Free Presbyterian).

Wesleyan Methodist Church built on present Crown Street site, Wollongong

1855

Sir William Thomas Denison appointed Governor.

8 October - Illawarra Mercury founded

Bishop Barker (Church of England) arrived in New South Wales.

Australian Methodism granted self-government - first New South Wales Conference.

Presbyterian church opened Gerringong.

Wesleyan chapel built Gerringong

Shoalhaven Wesleyan Methodist Circuit formed.

If the first third of the nineteenth century was characterised by weakness in the Australian churches in general and, in particular, by the tenuous planting of the faith in the sparsely-populated and convict-ridden soil of Illawarra, the second third was decisive in shaping and strengthening Australian churches. Governor Bourke's Church Act of 1836 abolished the privileged position of the Church of England, thus guaranteeing equality of opportunity for denominational expansion, aided by state subsidy. The eventual abolition of state aid for religion, however, was also clearly signalled. Hence the colonial experience forced the churches, after a brief period of generous government aid, to look more to lay initiative and support. This pushed the churches towards democratisation and a greater role for the laity, developments most clearly seen in the Anglican and Methodist denominations. The churches proved equal to the task, recovering in the process more apostolic views of ministry, church government, and stewardship.

1. FIRST ILLAWARRA CHURCHES

The development of the churches in Illawarra, after an initial spurt in the late 1830s, was restricted by the drought and depression of the '40s and the gold rushes of the '50s when settlers abandoned the district. The population of the town of Wollongong fell from 831 in 1841 to 515 in 1846 and 501 in 1851.

In the 1830s settlers were encouraged to take out clearing leases on the large estates granted in the previous decade. Much of the land south of Wollongong around Dapto and Kiama was cleared by an invasion of settlers. Flour mills were built at Wollongong, Dapto, Jamberoo, and Coolangatta on the Shoalhaven River, and around these townships developed.

Churches came with the towns. Religious services were held first in barns, flour mills, inns or private houses. Little time elapsed, however, before the major denominations erected churches in these towns. Even so, residents regretted the delay in completion of church buildings and the rudimentary structures necessitated by the depression. Churches were perceived as essential symbols of civilisation. To do without them was unthinkable.

TABLE 1: FIRST CHURCHES OR CHURCH/SCHOOLS
IN ILLAWARRA

	Anglican	Catholic	Presbyterian	Methodist
Wollongong	1839	1836	1839	1842
Dapto	1845	1838	1841	1848
Jamberoo	1842	1839	1842	1851 (shared Presbyterian church early '40s)
Kiama	1843	1848?	1848	1851
Gerrington	1856	1864	1855	1850
Nowra	1856	1849	1857	?
Shellharbour	1859	1861	1859	1865

Outside these towns regular, if not weekly, services were held in more remote and less populated areas. The relatively large number of such centres in Illawarra, and the impossibility of settling regular clergy in all of them, has meant that lay initiative has been essential to the vitality of the church in the region.

Wollongong Surveyed, 1834

Major-General Sir Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales from 1831 to 1838, made a lasting impact on Illawarra. He visited Wollongong in April 1834 in response to a petition signed by 100 settlers who appealed for the construction of a road to Sydney and a safe harbour. The following July, Bourke sent Major Thomas Mitchell and a team of surveyors to survey the town and surrounding roads. At the heart of Mitchell's plan for Wollongong was a two-acre square block of land promised to the Church of England by C.T. Smith on one of the highest rises of his property. It took Mitchell several days to overcome the difficulties involved in surveying the block which was to be approached by streets leading to the mid-point of two of its four sides. Mitchell was seen standing on the summit of the hill, studying the problem for hours on end, while an assistant stood at a respectful distance, not daring to disturb his concentration.

2. BOURKE'S CHURCH ACT, 1836

Meanwhile, in 1833, the Church and Schools Corporation, which had given the Church of England an education monopoly, was abolished. The problem was to replace it with a system to educate and 'moralise' the population. Public opinion, both in Britain and Australia, was beginning to favour voluntary support for churches. In the infant colony, however, this would not have worked. The population was too scattered and convict-ridden to support its own churches. Governor Bourke in his Church Act of 1836 placed the principal Christian churches on an equitable footing. Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Methodists, as well as Anglicans, could now have their clergy's stipends paid and their church building programmes subsidised. Clergy were paid according to the number of adults who wished to attend a place of worship: 100 pounds for 100 adults, 150 pounds for 200 adults, rising to a maximum of 200 pounds for 500 or more adults. A subsidy of no more than 1,000 pounds was paid for the erection of churches and parsonages where the congregation had raised an equal amount. Bourke hoped, by this Act, to secure 'to the State good subjects, and to society good men'. With less success, Bourke proposed that the 'Irish' National system of education be introduced in New South Wales, based on a syllabus of religious education, agreeable to Catholics, Anglicans, and other Protestants alike.

3. BISHOP BROUGHTON AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

It fell to William Grant Broughton, appointed Bishop of Australia in 1836, to guide the Church of England in its adjustment to its new legal position. Broughton had succeeded Thomas Hobbes Scott as Archdeacon of New South Wales in 1829. Unlike all subsequent bishops of Sydney, Broughton was not an Evangelical, but his missionary zeal was high, and his ecclesiastical statesmanship was visionary. Recommended to the Archdeaconry by the Duke of Wellington, Broughton was at first attracted to the position by the promise of economic security. When he discovered that the Duke had over-stated the material advantages, he was tempted to withdraw. Praying over the matter with the Bishop of Winchester at the altar of Farnham church, however, he came under conviction that he would ever reproach himself if he proved 'backward and fearful' in his Master's service.



William Grant Broughton.

A short, lame man of considerable energy, Broughton was so determined to find qualified clergy for the Colony that he, with others, prevailed on the Rev. Edward Coleridge to establish St. Augustine's College in Canterbury for the training of colonial clergy and missionaries. In the first half of the nineteenth century 'High Churchmen' such as Broughton, as much as Evangelicals and Catholics, embraced the cause of Christian missions, making it 'the great century' of church expansion. In Australia, Broughton's efforts to build the Church were supported generously by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation

of the Gospel formed respectively in 1699 and 1701 and now newly awakened to their missionary responsibility.

In Illawarra, however, Broughton, who first toured the region in 1837, met with frustration. The Chaplain, Frederick Wilkinson, alone of all the New South Wales Anglican clergy, supported Bourke's Irish National system of education. Broughton looked on, pained, as Wollongong, alone of all New South Wales towns, built an experimental school to introduce Bourke's scheme. Condemned mercilessly by Wilkinson's successor, the school remained unoccupied for over a decade, a monument to the unwillingness of the Christian churches to agree on a common educational policy. Broughton intervened unhelpfully, accusing the Wollongong Catholic priest of forging signatures on a petition and deceiving the Governor, accusations never substantiated. (D.G. Duchesne, *The Frontier Church and Society in Illawarra*, M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1980, p.105).

Broughton was no more successful in taking advantage of Bourke's Church Act to have a church built in Wollongong. C.T.

Smith sold the two acres, surveyed by Mitchell, to the Crown for the high price of sixty pounds and then probably donated the money to the church. The Crown donated the land to the church, vesting it in five trustees, the Bishop, the rector, and three prominent local pastoralists including Henry Osborne of Marshall Mount and his older brother, Dr. John Osborne. Henry was then well on his way to becoming the richest man in the colony. John, an ex-naval surgeon, died in 1850 and, together with his wife, is commemorated in a window, dedicated on 8 August 1971, in the northern transept of St. Michael's Cathedral.

The first St. Michael's Church of England, Wollongong

Wilkinson resigned the Illawarra chaplaincy early in 1837 and was replaced by the Rev. Matthew Devenish Meares, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. Immediately perceiving that Smith's barn was inadequate for public worship, Meares determined to take advantage of Bourke's Act to build a church. Indeed, the arrival of a new minister frequently coincides with a movement to build a new church. In 1839 Meares launched an appeal for funds and also opened, on a site purchased by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a substantial school in Market Street, little realising that it would have to double as a church until 1847.

On 14 October 1840 Bishop Broughton, after confirming 77 people at the school house, laid the foundation stone of St. Michael's in the presence of 'a very numerous and highly respectable congregation' (*SMH*, 19 October 1840). So far so good. Then, over lunch at the Wollongong Hotel, the Bishop's party altered the plans to provide for the erection of a stone, rather than a brick, church. This decision was prompted by the feeling that the colony had now come of age: transportation of convicts was abolished in that same year. A new nation should be symbolised by worthy buildings: by then it was believed that Gothic was the only reputable architectural style for a church, and stone the only material with which to build. The Anglicans were helped to arrive at all these conclusions by the fact that the Wollongong Presbyterians had built a handsome church the previous year, and even more decisively, on the very day preceding the laying of St. Michael's foundation stone, Bishop Polding had laid the foundation stone of St. Francis Xavier's Church, also a stone structure.

It is now customary to denounce such denominational rivalry as sectarianism, but to many in an age which admired competition it was received favourably as 'holy emulation' which could only improve the supply of spiritual services to a needy population. Indeed such rivalry needs little explanation: it would be more remarkable if the denominations had not modelled their ambitions on each other. The St. Michael's contractors, however, were immune to all such reasonable considerations. The plans could not be changed, they insisted - they had already ordered the bricks. Costly and protracted law suits ensued, culminating in a Supreme Court case, settled on 24 April 1844, which found against Meares.

The very stones cried out. A people who had earlier castigated the Archdeacon for this neglect, now had a Bishop to condemn. A correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 23 January 1845 reported that the St. Michael's foundation stone cried out:

Yes, here I am indeed alone and forlorn, like all shunned poverty - what is everyman's business is nobody's, I have been in this state five long years - no Bishop has deigned to look at me - I am in a truly friendless state ... Follow not the example of the multitude to despise my wretched condition, but pry into the reason why I am thus as you see me - a monument of disgrace to myself and all who profess to belong to me.

More succinctly, a second correspondent to the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 2 February 1845 accused the trustees of being 'full of pride and grand notions'.



John Vine Hall: First St. Michael's Wollongong, 1854. (Original in Mitchell Library, Sydney).

Without waiting for settlement of this dispute, Wollongong Anglicans, then known as Episcopalians, built themselves a church on a site in Corrimall Street, adjacent to the school house. It could seat about 150 people and was consecrated by Bishop Broughton on 13 January 1848. A visitor to Wollongong in 1849 described the first St. Michael's as 'a very pretty specimen of ecclesiastical architecture, but the roof is too high for the walls, and the position is bad, since it causes the roof to be the chief part of it, seen from many commanding points of view'. (*SMH*, 3 December 1849). Its early replacement must have been hoped for devoutly, since the Catholic Church, finished the same year (1849), was obviously far better proportioned (*Duchesne, op.cit.*, ch.VI)

Henry Osborne and the Offertory Plate



Henry Osborne



Sarah Osborne.

Just five days after Broughton consecrated the first St. Michael's, he rode into Liverpool exhausted by his two-weeks tour of Illawarra. He was now 60 years old and had not only negotiated dangerous floodwaters, but had debated long and hard with Henry Osborne about the financing of the Church of England. Born in County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1803, Osborne married Jane Marshall in 1828 and

arrived in New South Wales in 1829. A man of capital he was granted 2,560 acres south-west of Wollongong and allotted 30 convicts to work the estate which he named Marshall Mount. By 1847 he held over 300,000 acres in one run on the Murrumbidgee River and was one of the largest squatters in New South Wales.

Though very wealthy, Osborne was not pleased with Broughton's view that state aid for religion, even when supplemented by pew rents, was insufficient to enable the Church to meet its spiritual and pastoral responsibilities to the widely-scattered Australian population. In any case, continued Broughton, state aid was contrary to public opinion and would shortly be phased out, and parishioners should be called on to make weekly offertories to support their local parish church. Weekly offertories are not a Protestant custom, countered Osborne. Hence on 25 January 1848 Broughton wrote Osborne a long letter, later published, setting out his views on church financing. A weekly offertory, he argued, is consistent with St. Paul's teaching on giving in the New Testament, particularly in 1 Corinthians, ch.9. It is also consistent with the Church of England Prayer Book, he continued, for the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century emphasised the concept of the weekly offertory as a sign of 'their variation from the principles and practices of the Church of Rome'.

Hence, it was in opposition to the claims of the leading Illawarra layman, Henry Osborne, that Broughton forged those views on church financing which were shortly to be followed throughout Australia, views based on apostolic teaching on stewardship.

Did Osborne come to agree with his bishop? He purported to, but he wanted Dapto to become a parish separate from Wollongong, and he was not convinced that a rector for Dapto could be supported by voluntary offerings. Hence, after Broughton died in 1853, Osborne tried again, and the new bishop, Frederic Barker, who arrived in New South Wales in 1855, found that amongst his first duties was the need to attend to an application from Henry Osborne for state aid for the rector of Dapto.

Synodical Government

Broughton's recovery of a more Biblical view of stewardship was accompanied by a new emphasis on the role or 'priesthood' of

the laity which, according to the Acts of the Apostles, was a critical factor in the vitality of the early Church. In the Church of England the laity was represented since the Reformation in the Royal Supremacy. In colonial Australia, with its more democratic spirit, reasoned Broughton, the laity should be represented together with bishop and clergy in the synod which would become the supreme governing body of the Church of England in each diocese. Broughton argued along these lines at a Conference of five colonial bishops in Sydney in 1850, and thereafter the Church of England evolved towards self-government, independence of the State, and greater dependence on its members.



St. Luke's Dapto, parish hall, opened 1845.

By 1853, the year of Broughton's death the Church of England in Illawarra had three parishes: Wollongong (1833), Kiama (1850), and Dapto (1852). The Church of England had secured the support of the 'gentry' such as the Osbornes. Broughton had been right, however, to hope that this base, following the Biblical mandate, could be broadened to include all the faithful.

4. CATHOLICISM UNDER BISHOP FOLDING

Catholicism, like Anglicanism, was consolidated in Illawarra under the headship of a strong bishop. John Bede Polding, consecrated Bishop of Australia in London in June 1834, was not as astute a politician as Broughton, but he more than compensated for this by robust health, a consuming pastoral passion, missionary zeal, and love for sinners. Polding's gospel was Benedictine Christian humanism: intellectual, tasteful, saintly, courageous. In a word, magnificent. It was also old-fashioned and undemocratic, that is, unlikely to succeed. So, if his attempt to establish a Benedictine Monastery in Australia to redeem its barbarism through 'the sublime magnificence and grandeur of the ceremonies of the Catholic Church' was a failure, it was a magnificent failure. That it failed is a pity since, according to a letter written on 1 November 1838, Polding wished to site his projected Benedictine Monastery in Illawarra.



John Bede Polding.

Polding arrived in Australia in 1835 and first visited Illawarra in 1836 when he consecrated a cemetery in Jamberoo. The beauty and mystique of Illawarra found a resonance in his romantic nature. On 28 January 1836 he wrote from Wollongong, 'This tract of country called Illawarra is extremely beautiful, more perceptibly so perhaps from its contrasting with other parts of the colony'. By September 1836 the Catholics of Wollongong had built a wooden chapel capable of seating 250. A description of Wollongong written in that month by James Backhouse, a Quaker missionary, reveals how quickly church-building followed settlement: 'We went to Wollongong which is situated on a small boat-harbour. The buildings, at present erected, are, a police-office, two stores, two public-houses; a Roman Catholic chapel, and a few dwelling-houses, a barn

is also fitted up for an Episcopal place of worship', (J. Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, 1843, p.422).

Illawarra's first resident Catholic priest

During 1837 Polding visited Illawarra more than once and, in December, sent a Mr. and Mrs. Fowler to establish the first Catholic school in Wollongong. Meanwhile, on Pentecost Sunday 1837, Father John Rigney, of County Galway, was ordained to the priest-



John Rigney.

hood at Maynooth Seminary in Ireland. Following a long voyage 'full of thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes', he and six other Catholic priests were welcomed by Polding at Sydney Harbour. Rigney was appointed resident priest in Wollongong, in sole charge of the Mission Territory of Illawarra which stretched from Coalcliff in the north to Moruya in the south. In his eight years at Wollongong, 1838-46, Rigney baptised over 500 people, beginning in August 1838 with Thomas Henry, an aboriginal. In the same period he rode 26,000 miles on horseback: 'boundary riding for the Pope', he called it. Not content with the chapel at Wollongong, he determined to build a larger, permanent church.

St. Francis Xavier's Church, Wollongong

The decision to build was made in 1839, land was bought from Charles Throsby Smith for twenty pounds on 19 November of the same year, tenders were called in March 1840, and applications were made to the government for assistance to build the church and pay the clergy. Alexander Elliott and Matthew Ryan were appointed trustees, and the aid was granted. Readers of *The Australian Catholic*

Directory for 1841 were informed that 'The Church of St. Francis Xavier when finished will be a handsome stone building in the pure Gothic style sustained with much ornament, and will be sufficiently large to contain 1,500 persons. Its estimated expense is 2,000 pounds.'

The laying of the foundation stone on 13 October 1840 attracted 2,000 people, a far larger crowd than either that which welcomed Governor Bourke in 1834 or that which attended the laying of St. Michael's foundation stone the next day. Such demonstrations of strength were important to Catholics, they liked big churches, big crowds, and big processions. People came from Dapto, Jamberoo, and Shoalhaven. Schoolchildren from Catholic schools at Dapto and Unanderra (then known as Charcoal) played an important part. The procession moved off to the singing of 'O come all ye faithful' which, reported an observer, was 'slightly unseasonable but appropriate'.

Sectarian outburst

According to the 1841 census the Catholic population of the entire Illawarra was only 1,248, but this clearly understates Catholic strength. The 1841 *Catholic Directory* estimated the Catholic population at 2,650, and the Illawarra Catholic Total Abstinence Society was reported to have nearly 2,000 members in 1842. Such conspicuous strength made some Protestants nervous. Father Rigney's Teetotal society was emotionally attacked by the Wollongong reporter from the *Sydney Morning Herald* in November 1841. Banners displayed in the society's processions, the reporter charged, had insignia emblematic of a political position insulting to the Irish Protestants who made up the majority of the Illawarra population. Rigney replied (*SMH*, 2 December 1841) that, to his knowledge, only two persons had joined the publicans in objecting to the society's processions, whereas 'the whole district ... of all grades and denominations, give to our exertions and proceedings their warm approbation'. Sectarian outbursts have frequently marred the history of Illawarra churches, but they have probably always been the work of a few.

Caroline Chisholm

One who always poured oil on the troubled waters of sectarianism was that remarkable Catholic, Caroline Chisholm. Born in England

and raised an Anglican, Mrs. Chisholm adopted the Catholic faith when she married an Irish army officer who was posted to India. Holidaying in Australia, she was appalled at the fate of immigrant girls in Sydney, particularly orphan girls who had no protectors. Prostitution, she believed, could not be eradicated, but that it should result from a lack of Christian care was shameful: '... I felt assured that the God of all mercies would not allow so many poor creatures to be lost'. She attempted to dismiss from her mind the feeling that she had a responsibility in the matter, but her conscience troubled her:

I was impressed with the idea, that God had, in a peculiar manner, fitted me for this work, and yet I hesitated... My delay pressed on my mind as a sin; and when I heard of a poor girl suffering distress and losing her reputation in consequence, I felt I was not clear of her sin, for I did not do all I could to prevent it.

Mrs. Chisholm's words show that she had been examining her conscience before going to Confession, using such questions as 'Did I contribute to the sin of another?' 'Did I do all I could to prevent it?' The coming of Lent in 1841 alerted her to the need for self-sacrifice:-

During the season of Lent ... I suffered much; but on the Easter Sunday, I was enabled, at the altar of our Lord, to make an offering of my talents to the God who gave them. I promised to know neither country nor creed, but to try to serve all justly and impartially ... I felt my offering was accepted, and that God's blessing was on my work ...

So her great work began: meeting the emigrants at the docks, accommodating them temporarily, and then placing them in employment. She made many journeys into the bush and personally settled 11,000 on the land.

Early in December 1843 she accompanied 240 settlers, comprising thirty families, on the steamer from Sydney to Shellharbour, south of Wollongong. They disembarked on the evening of 7 December and set off into the bush, only to find they had no water. Her companions began to murmur as the Israelites did to Moses in the desert. 'If you will dig here,' she said authoritatively, 'I think you will find water'. They did, of course, and the exuberant spirits returned. The next day they began to erect huts on a 4,000 acre grant owned by Captain Towns, after whom Townsville is named.

Mrs. Chisholm stayed with the settlers for some weeks, seeing in her mind's eye the wild beauty transformed into domestic happiness: smoke curling from the farmhouse chimney, the kettle on the hob, the baby asleep in his crib, husband and wife sitting by the fire-side'. Her Illawarra experiment was a great success, and two wealthy grantees, William Warren Jenkins and Henry Osborne, offered to allow more of her settlers to lease their land. (On Caroline Chisholm see M. Kiddle, *Caroline Chisholm*, 1950; M. Hoban, *Fifty-One Pieces of Wedding Cake*, 1973; P. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, 1977, p.84f).

Polding's Jubilee visit to Illawarra, 1844

Illawarra Catholicism continued to be characterised by huge processions and amazing demonstrations of affection for Polding, who in 1843 was created Australia's first Archbishop. Polding's reception in Illawarra in April 1844 is reminiscent of the first Palm Sunday:

Although it was understood that His Grace would not open the Jubilee before Wednesday 1st May, so ardent was the zeal of the parishioners that as early as Tuesday morning they assembled in large bodies at Wollongong, whence they proceeded by the Appin road to the foot of the mountain, there to await the arrival of His Grace, and to escort him thence into town with every testimony of dutiful respect and filial veneration for their chief pastor and Archbishop. With three cheers of welcome was His Grace received in the beautiful and romantic avenues of the mountain pass, by a party of horsemen to the number of one hundred, bearing — branches of luxuriant evergreens in which this mountain is known to abound. At the joyous meeting of the Archbishop and his people of the Illawarra district, many were the salutations and the recognitions and congratulations interchanged.

(*Morning Chronicle*, 8 May 1844)

Opening of St. Francis Xavier's, Wollongong

In May 1844 Polding conducted a mission in the old wooden chapel at Wollongong 'within sight of the rising walls of the new St. Francis Xavier's Church'. Erection of the ambitious edifice was then only half completed as the economic depression slowed all building in Illawarra. We know that Father Rigney took a personal interest in the construction because, in 1845, he was injured when scaffolding collapsed. He was probably more hurt, however, by his appoint-

ment as chaplain to the penal settlement of Norfolk Island just as the church was nearing completion. Polding opened the church on 9 December 1849. It is the oldest building still used as a church in Illawarra. Like other 'Polding Churches' of the present Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, including Appin, Berrima, Camden, Nowra, and Picton, St. Francis Xavier's is a monument to a man who was a missionary first, a priest second, and a bishop third.



John Rae, Wollongong, 1851; St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church on right. (Original in Dixon Library, Sydney).

5. PRESBYTERIANISM

If the English were represented in Australia by the Church of England, and the Irish by the Catholic Church, the Scots were represented by the Presbyterian Church which was the Established Church in Scotland. Presbyterians in 1808 built a stone chapel at Ebenezer, the oldest church still standing in Australia. At first, however, services in the chapel were not conducted according to Presbyterian rites, for members shared the ecumenical outlook of the London Missionary Society which they supported warmly. This Evangelical society formed in 1795 resolved 'not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy or any other form of Church Order or Government ... but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the Heathen'. Its support by early Australian settlers is yet further evidence of the ecumenical Evangelicalism of much early Australian Protestantism.

John Dunmore Lang

On 23 May 1823, however, the first ordained Presbyterian minister, John Dunmore Lang (1799-1878) arrived in the colony, and a few weeks later this major prophet - he was easily the most controversial clergyman in nineteenth-century Australia - preached on a text from one of the minor prophets, 'The Lord stirred up the spirit of the Governor, Priest, and People, and they came and did the work in the House of the Lord their God' (Haggai 1.14). So began the building of Scots Church, Sydney. Lang was more interested, however, in clergy than in buildings, and he made many voyages to Scotland to put the struggling needs of the infant colony before young divinity students (licentiates).

On his third such visit, Lang advised the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, that Illawarra was one district in which the settlement of Presbyterian ministers was earnestly desired by the resident Presbyterian population. Lang had visited Illawarra in May 1836 and, at one time, owned Kembla Grange, south-west of Wollongong, and had a vision of founding there a colony of God-fearing, Sabbath-keeping Presbyterians. Instead it became a race course with a Catholic chaplain!



First Jamberoo Presbyterian Church, erected 1842.

In response to Lang's request for a Presbyterian clergyman for Illawarra, the Rev. John Tait arrived in Wollongong on 27 September 1837. He held the first service in the Court House, and then rode south canvassing for the 100 adult supporters required to qualify for state aid under Bourke's Act. On 26 October 1837 Michael Hindmarsh of 'Aine Bank', Gerringong, wrote to his sister in Edinburgh, 'There was a Minister of the Church of Scotland, a Mr. Tait, who has only been in the colony a month, sent to our District to canvass Adult Hearers. He stopped at my house two nights ... I hailed the arrival of Mr. Tait with inward joy ... He promises to preach here twice a month.' Hindmarsh was typical of the early Illawarra settlers who 'earnestly desired' the creation of Christian institutions in their new society.

Opening of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wollongong



Crown Street, Wollongong, showing the spire of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Tait found considerably more than the 100 adults required and moved quickly to build a church in Wollongong. The 1841 census gave 634 adherents of the Church of Scotland living in Illawarra, which constituted a percentage of the total population above the national average. Of these, however, only 30 adults and 17 children were said to reside in Wollongong. Nevertheless, the Presbyterians

opened in Wollongong on 4 August 1839 a brick church capable of seating 300 people and described in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (7 August) as 'a neat brick-built edifice in the Gothic style from a design by Mr. Hume'. According to architectural authority, Morton Herman, James Hume is 'a very obscure figure in Australian architecture', yet he was the first architect employed to design St. Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney.

The erection in Wollongong of this large Gothic church by a small community within five years of the town's foundation was an act richly symbolic of the importance of religion and of the survival of familiar religious forms in a new and strange land. As if divining the significance of the occasion, Tait presided resplendent in 'an elegant new pulpit gown, presented to him by the ladies of his congregation'. In 1843, during the incumbency of Tait's successor, Cunningham Atchison, the church acquired its tower, spire (dubbed 'Atchison's folly'), and porch. Located on the north-west corner of Crown and Church Streets, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was an ornament to the town for 98 years. It was demolished in 1937.

The Free Presbyterians

In Scotland the Free Church was formed in 1843 when the Evangelical party, led by the great preacher and theology professor, Thomas Chalmers, broke with the Established Church in the belief that it was too tramelled by the State. This event, known as 'the Disruption', divided Australian Presbyterianism. From 1845 until 1865, when the two reunited in NSW, the Free Church was represented in Illawarra alongside the 'Est-



George Mackie.

ablished' Presbyterians. The 'Established' work was stronger in Wollongong under Cunningham Atchison who served as minister from 1841 until 1864. The Free Church was stronger in Kiama and Jamberoo under the Rev. George Mackie, minister from 1849 to 1857.

Services at Kiama were held in an old store situated on the beach so that the noise of the surf threatened to drown the voice of the preacher. Sea snakes were also a threat, and Mackie, who once saw a snake while preaching, abandoned the pulpit, found a gun, shot the snake, and resumed his sermon without a word of explanation to the congregation.

Something of the intensity of Presbyterianism in Jamberoo is conveyed in Henrietta Heathorn's *Pictures of Australian Life 1843-44*. The daughter of the manager of the Woodstock flour mill near Jamberoo, Henrietta visited workers who lived in humble cabbage-tree huts. One was 'a dour Irish Orangeman, a strict Presbyterian of Calvinistic learnings' who would always steer the conversation to religious controversy. His skill in disputation amazed her, and he settled every debate by referring to a large volume known as 'Scott's Commentaries on the Bible'. Thomas Scott was a moderate, not a strict, Calvinist for while he believed that 'man's salvation is all of God' he also believed that 'man's damnation is all of himself'. A prominent Anglican Evangelical, Thomas Scott was the first secretary of the Church Missionary Society and he had a marked influence on John Henry, later Cardinal, Newman. The line of spiritual descent through the Jamberoo Orangeman and Miss Heathorn was not so suspicious: she married T.H. Huxley, the famous scientist, who so embarrassed Bishop Samuel Wilberforce over the theory of evolution.

Separate Free Church parishes were formed in 1853 at Shoalhaven, 1854 at Gerrigong, and, in the same year, at Albion Park. In 1850 Shoalhaven became a separate parish of the 'Established' Presbyterians. The period of division, however, was not a period of weakness since strong doctrinal commitment was accompanied by strong commitment to Church growth. The district of the Shoalhaven, for example, worked with equal zeal by both Free and 'Established' Presbyterians, and dominated by the staunchly Presbyterian Berry family, became well-known as a Presbyterian stronghold. A number of highland families settled in the Shoalhaven, and the first Free Church minister, William Grant, conducted services there in Gaelic for many years.

6. WESLEYAN METHODISM

The youngest and fastest-growing of the denominations was

Methodism, born of the spiritual fervour and organising genius of John Wesley (1703-1791). The Methodist movement emphasised revivalism and the experience of conversion, missionary outreach, lay initiative and Scriptural holiness. To ensure the discipline of members, Wesley instituted the class system, and by 1812 NSW Methodism had a class membership of about twenty. In response to a request from three Methodist class leaders, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, founded in Leeds in 1814, sent the Rev. Samuel Leigh to Sydney in 1815. Hence, Australian Methodism began as a lay activity, and even when clergy arrived they were young and inexperienced and were dependent on the wisdom and assistance of the laity. If this was true of Sydney in the second decade of the last century, it was also true of Illawarra in the late 1830s and 1840s.



John Vidler

Methodist lay preacher and early revivals

The first known Wesleyan service in Illawarra was held just before Christmas 1838 by John Vidler, a Methodist local preacher, who had arrived in the colony that same year. The congregation consisted of his wife and brother, and the service was held in a hut on the Albion Park estate of Mr. Terry Hughes who had engaged Vidler as a farm labourer.

Associated as a lad with 'a gang of smugglers', Vidler had experienced a typical Wesleyan conversion, followed by 'a joy rich and full'. Such joy could not be contained and, at Dapto, he soon discovered two Methodists who had been praying for a preacher for seven long years. Vidler was horrified, however, by another discovery: his fellow farm labourers did not observe the Sabbath and rarely even knew which was the seventh day. He first warned

'those poor men' of the 'awful consequences' of desecrating the Sabbath. And then he began to preach. In 1839 revival broke out in Dapto. Thirty persons were converted and formed into a Wesleyan Society. In October 1839 Vidler was appointed leader of the Dapto Society by the Rev. William Schofield, the first ordained Methodist minister to visit Illawarra.

Vidler preached at Marshall Mount and so impressed Henry Osborne that he was invited to preach regularly in Osborne's own house. Subsequently Osborne, who like Wesley lived and died an Anglican, donated land for Methodist chapels at Dapto and Marshall Mount. The Anglican rector of Wollongong, Matthew Meares, who had allowed Schofield to preach from his pulpit during his 1839 visit, now feared that he was beginning to lose his congregation to the Methodists and concluded that Vidler would have to go. Osborne, on the contrary, was determined that Vidler should stay and offered him any farm on his estate rent-free for life, an offer Vidler declined. Vidler preached at Jamberoo in response to a request from a young woman who claimed that 'the Word of God is not in all the place', and he also ministered powerfully to 80 persons at Coolangatta in the heart of Berry's Presbyterian fiefdom.



Marshall Mount Methodist Church - lit by kerosene lamps.

In 1840 two prominent Methodist families, the Somervilles and Blacks, arrived in Illawarra, comprising a party of ten adults, nine of whom were class members and three were class leaders. They established Methodism in the town of Wollongong, and in 1842, four years before the appointment of a resident minister, a chapel was built with seating for 200. Located in Keira Street on a quarter-acre site given by C.T. Smith, this 'strong slab building' was replaced in 1854 by a church on the present Crown Street site of Wesley Church. By this time chapels had been built at Dapto (1848) and Kiama (1851), and Wollongong had been separated from Camden and made into an independent circuit (1851).

If Methodism came late to Illawarra it came with such vigour that it unnerved the leaders of other denominations. Bishop Broughton thought that Anglican settlers were too willing to co-operate with people of different religious persuasions, especially Methodists, and Bishop Polding was of the opinion that Methodism was a far more serious rival to Catholicism than Anglicanism.

7. A BRIEF BAPTIST WORK

One denomination, the Baptist, failed to take root in nineteenth-century Illawarra which is surprising at first sight since the Baptists were enthusiastic missionaries. William Carey, the shoemaker/teacher, had founded the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in 1792, the first of the great modern missionary societies. Carey took the gospel to India, and a grandson, W.H. Carey, was a prominent Baptist pastor in NSW from 1850.

From the Ecclesiastical Returns for NSW we learn that in Wollongong there was a wooden Baptist chapel in Market Street as early as 1840. The Baptist minister in 1840 was John Morgan who had been a member of the Bathurst Street Church, the main Baptist Church in Sydney, during the pastorate of John Saunders who had chosen to come to Australia as a BMS missionary rather than enter the British Parliament. Morgan was partly supported at Wollongong by the Bathurst Street congregation and he also conducted a school to supplement his income.

Baptists and Congregationalists, as a matter of conscience, received no state aid under Bourke's Act, and these two denominat-

ions grew more slowly than those which accepted the aid. Furthermore, no central Baptist organisation existed in NSW until 1868 to help struggling churches or train ministers. Lay initiative, essential to the birth of Illawarra churches was not sufficient to sustain life: a denominational infrastructure was also required.

Morgan was replaced in 1841 by the Rev. Samuel Hewlett who had come to Australia in 1820 and whose son, George, was to dominate Wollongong Congregationalism in the second half of the century. After 1844, when Hewlett left, there is no further mention of the Baptist chapel in the Ecclesiastical returns, and it must be concluded that Baptist services had lapsed.

Baptists and Congregationalists were then known as Independents. They had much in common, and the organisational demarcation between them was not rigid. It is tempting to suspect on the basis of the Hewletts - Samuel the Baptist father and George the Congregationalist son - that the Wollongong Baptist work was translated into a Congregationalist work. This suspicion is reinforced by the fact that the Ecclesiastical Returns say that the Baptist minister of Wollongong from 1841 to 1844 was George, not Samuel, Hewlett, an entry which the Baptist historian, A.C. Prior, says must have been a mistake (*Some Fell on Good Ground*, 1966, p.67). The gap between the collapse of the Baptist work and the beginning of the Congregationalist work, however, was a decade - too great a hiatus to be explained by my hypothesis without further evidence. A patient detective is required to disentangle the confused origins of the Wollongong Baptists and Congregationalists. As an added challenge, the Free Presbyterians were entangled there as well.

Wollongong religion in the late 1840s

Just before the opening of St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church in December 1849, an English visitor to Illawarra, Lt. Col. G.C. Mundy, gave an interesting description of the state of religion in Wollongong, contrasting its apparent prosperity with the town's lack of it, and revealing that Catholicism was challenging the assumed Anglican ascendancy:

The town of Wollongong contains about 120 houses, and 500 or 600 inhabitants. One-fifth of the buildings are tumbling down or

tenantless, two-fifths are public-houses, and the rest belong to settlers, shopkeepers and professional men. There are places of worship for all shades and tastes of creed. Besides the four or five which, as the French say, 'jump to the eyes' of the traveller, there are others of less demonstrative exterior, so that spiritual destitution, it is said, is rare - and we hear a good deal of it in New South Wales - must be voluntary.

In the Protestant church, on Sunday morning, I found about sixty grown-up persons, exclusive of the minister and an individual in a holland blouse and clarinet, personating the organ ... The Protestants are split into sects; every man must set up a creed for himself; and Dissent appears to be the rule rather than the exception ... The Roman Catholics here, as generally in these colonies, appear to have increased in numbers and consequence at a much greater ratio than other denominations. The reason is obvious. Union is strength: the Romanists are devoted to one set of tenets - bound up in one common cause - presenting the strongest 'formation' for resistance, if not for conquest ... A handsome stone chapel, nearly finished, will shortly replace the present modest wooden edifice. The priest (Father Peter Young), it need hardly be added, possesses a most comfortable cottage, a clever hack, and a sleek exterior.

(From *Our Antipodes*, quoted in *Illawarra Historical Society Bulletin*, December 1974, p 5).



Wallongong, 1855: St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church (centre); first St. Michael's Church of England (right).

The two decades following the passage of Bourke's Church Act, then, saw the rapid growth of Christian institutions - churches and denominational schools - among the Illawarra population. The vitality must be attributed primarily to government aid, partly to lay initiative (the Catholics and Methodists built churches in Wollongong before the appointment of resident clergy), and partly to the missionary zeal of the early clergy. The energetic programme of church building has been seen by critics of state aid as a substitute for a religious revival, but it is more appropriately seen as an expression of revival for, as we have seen, the Christianity brought to Illawarra by the four major denominations was already revived.

CHAPTER THREE

DAIRYING AND VOLUNTARY RELIGION

1856 – 1879

TABLE OF EVENTS

1856 -- 1879

1856

Beginning of responsible Government in NSW

Population of the town of Wollongong 864.

Shoobert sold Mt. Kebra Mine to Henry Osborne.

Moore Theological College (Anglican) opened in Liverpool

6 July - *St. George's Gerringong opened (C of E) - timber church.*

26 July - *St. John's Shoalhaven (Terara), opened (C of E) - slab church (seat 200).*

Catholics resolved to build a new church at Dapto.

20 October - *Foundation stone laid of Congregational Church, Wollongong.*

1857

Osborne-Wallsend mine opened, Mt. Kebra

Rev. T.C. Ewing appointed Rector of Wollongong (C of E).

Jamberoo and Shellharbour split off from Kiama Parish (C of E).

Church of England Church built at Nowra.

Presbyterian Church built at Nowra.

Second Wesleyan Methodist Minister appointed to Wollongong Circuit.

1857

Wesleyan Church, Terara, opened.

First known Primitive Methodist service held in Illawarra

- 6 August - Opening of Congregational Church, Wollongong.
Branch of Congregational Sunday School formed
at Mt. Keira.

1858

Manhood suffrage and vote by ballot introduced.

Woonona mine opened.

Foundation stone laid of St. Michael's, Wollongong (C of E).

- 3 April - Opening of St. Peter and St. Paul RC Church,
Kiama.

- October - Start made on Shellharbour Roman Catholic
Church.

Wesleyan Sunday School started in Somerville's home, Bulls.

Baptists met at Kiama Court House.

1859

Three municipalities proclaimed: Wollongong, Shellharbour with
Albion Park, and Kiama.

NSW Wesleyan Methodist Church Sustentation and Extension Society
formed.

- 13 January - Opening of Christ Church, Kiama (C of E).

- 13 March - Opening of Church of England, Shellharbour
(stone).

- July - Opening of first Fairy Meadow Church of England.

- 15 December - Consecration of St. Michael's Wollongong (C of E).

- 27 November - Opening of Shellharbour Presbyterian Church.

Wollongong divided into three Wesleyan Methodist Circuits:
Wollongong, Kiama, Shoalhaven.

Primitive Methodist Chapel built at Foxground.

1860

28 September - *American Creek (Mount Kembla) Chapel licensed (C of E).*

Primitive Methodist Station established at Wollongong.

1861

Free Selection Acts made land available to settlers on easier terms than previously - encouraged population growth.

Population of town of Wollongong 1,397.

Mine opened at Bellambi.

15 August - *Catholic Church opened, Shellharbour.*

9 June - *Building adapted for Catholic worship at Fairy Meadow.*

Wesleyan Chapel opened, Foxground.

October - *A new Methodist Church opened at Dapto.*

Baptist Chapel at Shellharbour.

Work began on Gerringong Congregational Church.

Church opened at Broughton Creek (Berry) for use by all denominations.

1862

Mt. Pleasant Mine opened.

9 November - *Berkeley Church of England opened.*

Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist chapels opened at Mt. Keira.

27 January - *Wesleyan Methodist chapel opened at Bulli (converted barn).*

3 December - *Wesleyan Church opened at Kiama.*

1863

State aid to religion abolished in NSW.

Kiama Independent established.

Norwa RC Parish created.

4 March - *Opening of Free Church Presbyterian Church in
Kiama.*

Shellharbour Wesleyan Church built (stone).

Mt. Keira Wesleyan Church built.

March - *First Primitive Methodist minister (T.E. Mell)
arrived in Wollongong.*

1864

Syllabus of Errors, Rome.

27 September - *Albert Memorial Hospital opened.*

Catholic school/church built at Gerringong (wooden).

1865

Reunification of the Presbyterian Churches in NSW.

*Pioneer shale kerosene works established at Mt. Kembla by John
Graham (Wesleyan).*

26 February - *Opening of stone Wesleyan Shellharbour Church.*

7 May - *Opening of stone Wesleyan Church, Bulli.*

1866

*Church of England in the Province of NSW accepts synodical govern-
ment.*

3 October - *Congregational Union of NSW established.*

Stone Presbyterian Church opened at Albion Park.

1867

First Anglican Lambeth Conference

2 January - *Church of the Resurrection (Jamberoo) licensed (C of E)*

Albion Park RC Parish created (included Dapto and Shellharbour).

Primitive Methodist Church built at Bulli.

1868

Shellharbour Steam Navigation Co. commenced

Coal exports from Illawarra: 31,443 tons.

6 October - *Belmore Basin opened by Lady Belmore (Governor's wife).*

1869

September - *Foundation stone laid of Catholic Church, Numba.*

27 August - *Foundation stone laid of Gerringong Wesleyan Church (stone).*

12 December - *Primitive Methodist Chapel opened in Market Street, Wollongong.*

1870

Baptist Union of NSW formed.

Roman Catholic Parish of Dapto formed.

1871

Great Gerringong fire - destroys C of E church and school.

Gerringong Catholic School closed.

29 September - *Woonona Presbyterian Church opened.*

1872

Australian General Synod (C of E) formed.

26 January - Church of Good Shepherd, Kangaroo Valley,
licensed (C of E).

1873

St. Mary's Convent and school opened, Wollongong.

15 January - Foundation stone laid of Presbyterian Church,
Nowra (sandstone).

1874

*Wesleyan Methodist Conference divided into four regions covering
Australia and New Zealand.*

29 July - St. George's Gerringong C of E opened and licensed.

25 January - St. Paul's Catholic Church, Albion Park, opened.

Catholic church built at Kangaroo Valley.

1875

*First General Conference of the Australian Wesleyan Methodist
Church.*

8 December - All Saints Albion Park, opened (C of E).

November - St. Matthew's, Jamberoo, (RC) foundation stone
laid.

Presbyterian Church, Nowra, opened.

1876

26 January - Opening of present St. Stephen's Presbyterian
Church, Jamberoo.

1877

Clifton came into being with opening of Coalcliff Colliery

Roger William Vaughan appointed Catholic Archbishop of Sydney.

Berkeley C of E closed - site of present Berkeley cemetery.

29 September - St. Michael's Church, Nowra, opened (stone -RC).

Beginning of work on Jamberoo Wesleyan Church and Nowra Wesleyan Church.

1878

Presbyterian Parish of Berry created (formerly Broughton Creek).

1879

7 September - Opening of St. Matthew's RC Church, Jamberoo.

28 March - Opening of Methodist Church, Jamberoo.

T.S. Eliot once said that Christianity is always changing itself into something which is believable. A fascination of Church History is to analyse how the Church, with its unchanging Gospel, adjusts to changing circumstances. Two dramatic changes - one political, the other economic - tested the resilience of Illawarra churches in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

State aid was abolished, first to churches and clergy, and then to denominational schools. Protestants redirected their energies into Sunday schools and evangelism. Catholics, on the other hand, continued their strategy of Christianisation through church schools and built an independent education system. Because the responses were different, sectarian suspicion between Catholic and Protestant was further fostered. Yet the fact, so clear in retrospect, was that both responses drew deeply on the devotion and self-sacrifice nurtured by the one Christian faith.

The Illawarra economy also changed dramatically in this period. Wheat-growing, rendered unprofitable by rust, a fungus infection, was displaced by dairy farming. The old towns of Illawarra prospered, and handsome new churches replaced the humbler churches of pioneering days.

1. ABOLITION OF STATE AID

The ending of transportation to NSW in 1840 and the granting of Responsible Government in 1856, followed by the introduction of manhood suffrage and secret ballot in 1858, spelt doom for state aid. The role of the clergy as 'policemen without boots' was no longer seen as essential to the welfare of the State, while democracy made all privilege look old-fashioned. State aid to religion (subsidies for church building and payment of clergy stipends) was abolished in NSW in 1863. The Government, led by Henry Parkes, then turned to the more difficult task of phasing out state aid to denominational schools. The Public Schools Act of 1866 brought denominational schools under the control of a Council of Education which discouraged further expansion of elementary church schools, and the Public Instruction Act of 1880 ended state aid altogether.

The abolition of state aid to churches and church schools did

not signify any decline in religious belief: the Government was anti-sectarian, not secular. Among the many clergy and laity who supported the abolition were Evangelicals and Nonconformists who were of the opinion that, ever since the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century A.D., state establishments had never benefitted the Church.

Denominational Adjustments

The Church of England in NSW responded to these developments by adopting in 1866 a synodical form of Church government. The laity joined the clergy in a mixed assembly, a system more compatible with the Australian democratic temperament. In the following year the first Lambeth Conference was held, signifying that the world-wide Anglican Communion was now made up of many independent national churches. Unsettled by the abolition of state aid, but cheered by the accompanying removal of state control, members of the Church of England in NSW accepted the situation and worked to extend their denomination by voluntary endeavour. Frederic Barker, Bishop of Sydney from 1854 to 1882, knew how to run the Church on voluntary lines. In England he had worked in a new Liverpool parish financed exclusively by voluntary offerings. In Australia he formed the Church Society, later the Home Mission Society, to raise funds for the erection of churches and clergy stipends.

Unlike the Anglicans, Catholics unreservedly condemned legislation abolishing state aid. Pope Pius IX, whose pontificate (1846-78) has been the longest in the church's history, viewed with alarm the encroachments of secularism and liberalism the world over. In the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), Pius IX condemned secular, State-controlled education. Hence Catholics were bound to establish an independent education system, thus widening the gulf which separated them from Protestants.

Presbyterianism, divided by the Scottish Disruption of 1843, was reunited by 1865 in NSW. Methodism, separated from its English parent in 1855, grew vigorously in NSW, if not in Illawarra, over the next two decades, and in 1874 the NSW Wesleyan Conference was divided into four separate Conferences: NSW - Queensland; Victoria - Tasmania; South Australia; New Zealand. The NSW Baptist Union was formed in 1870 to assist struggling churches, and another trad-

itionally 'Independent' denomination, the Congregationalists formed the Congregational Union of NSW in 1866. In sum, the churches were girding their loins, but whether for a fight or a race was not clear, even to themselves.

2. CATHOLIC SCHOOLING AND 'THE APOSTOLATE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION'

By 1873, just seven years after the passage of the Public Schools Act, the number of Public schools in Illawarra (eleven) was almost as great as the number of denominational schools (twelve, including six Church of England, four Catholic, and two Presbyterian). Having established itself in areas where there had been no schools, the dreaded state virus attacked areas where two denominational schools had existed in wasteful competition. In Charcoal (Unanderra), Catholic and Presbyterian schools had operated since 1840. Unanderra Public School was opened in 1878. The Catholic priest in Wollongong, Dean Flanagan, protested in vain that it was all a Protestant plot. By 1881 enrolments at the public school were 103, while those at the Catholic school slumped to 18, and it had to be closed.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan

Flanagan, however, had already taken steps to fight the state virus. In 1873, at his invitation and with Archbishop Polding's blessing, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan began to teach in St. Francis Xavier's School and at St. Mary's School, both in Harbour Street, Wollongong. Unlike other Catholic bishops in Australia, Polding had resisted bringing in Irish and European teaching orders, the obvious alternative to a State system. He had personally, however, founded the Institute of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St. Benedict, his own Order. Polding's pastoral heart had gone out to the diggers in the gold rushes, and he had established the Order to care for inner-city women and girls deserted by their menfolk. The Sisters sometimes accompanied Polding on his missionary journeys, doing social work and giving catechetical instruction.

Dean Flanagan's request for full-time assistance in the Wollongong schools led Polding to see that some of the Order's Sisters were called to a specific education apostolate. His coadjutor, Roger William Vaughan, destined to succeed Polding in 1877 as Archbishop

of Sydney, encouraged the development of this line of thought, for only so could a Catholic education system be sustained in the absence of state aid. The old Marine Hotel in Harbour Street was sold to the church in 1873: it became known as the Convent of St. Mary, Star of the Sea, and five sisters under M. Angela Carroll, Mother Superior, took up residence. By 1874 St. Mary's had enrolled over 60 pupils, and in 1875, St. Mary's secondary school began with 24 pupils, including 14 boarders, and quickly acquired a reputation for excellence which it has never lost.

Archbishop Vaughan and the Sisters of St. Joseph



Roger William Vaughan



Mary McKillop

On 14 July 1880 Vaughan inaugurated a Catholic school at Dapto run by the Sisters of St. Joseph, founded by the saintly Mary McKillop. The Parish priest of Dapto, Father Augustus William Petre who always wore a top hat and was destined to take his ancestral seat in the House of Lords, welcomed the Sisters with great chivalry. They were equally thrilled with this 'perfect English gentleman', but professionals as they were, they most commended him for his 'exalted idea of what nuns ought to do for children'. Perhaps the future Lord Petre already had in mind the extension of their work to Albion Park, part of his Parish.

Archbishop Vaughan was even more ambitious. In opening the Dapto school he stated his intention to have such schools established in all centres of population throughout the Diocese, and urged on the people the necessity of contributing liberally towards the support of such a good and laudable system' (*Freeman's Journal*, 17 July 1880). Vaughan, an English Benedictine like Polding, was magnificent: tall, youthful, handsome, erudite, eloquent, reasonable, and tolerant. He had but one genetic defect: a propensity to heart disease. In 1881 he wrote, 'I shall show them ... that we can hold our own without them - I mean without Parkes and his help, and a just deal more than hold our own. If I keep my health, you may depend upon it, I will solve the schools question, in a way that will astonish them.' He did not keep his health. He died in 1883, but not before showing 'them'. In 1873 Sydney had 34 Catholic schools. In 1883 it had 102, with 12,500 of Sydney's 15,200 Catholic children as pupils.

Illawarra's flourishing Catholic education system, then, dates from this period. From 1880 until the mid 1960s, when state aid was reintroduced, Illawarra Catholicism, like Catholicism everywhere in Australia, was a system focussing on one thing: the maintenance of schools. In church building, the nave was built first so that it could double as school accommodation: the sanctuary was the work of later years. Priests, no matter what their gifts, were



Catholic School and Residence, Charcoal, c.1860?

expected to be financial entrepreneurs, raising money for the education programme. Hence not even the naturally aloof among the priests would ever be remote from their people. In a ceaseless round of fetes, balls and lamington drives, priest and people were always working together, and some remarkably unprepossessing priests were much loved by their people.

3. THE BUTTER BOOM

But we have run ahead of our story and must return to the years 1856-79 when central and southern Illawarra became a dairying paradise. Butter was produced so easily and cheaply, complained one visiting clergyman, that indolence threatened to weaken the character of local inhabitants. At first butter was manufactured on each farm and then sent by sea to Sydney. Later, butter factories and milk depots were established. Production was greatly increased by the development of the Illawarra Shorthorn Durham breed and by pasture improvement. Wollongong became a thriving market town by the late 1850s, with 500 or so country folk coming into town on market days. The southern centres of Dapto, Shellharbour, Albion Park, Jamberoo, Kiama, Gerringong, and Shoalhaven all prospered. The marriage register of Christ Church, Kiama, for 1856-80 shows that of 105 marriages, 59 grooms were farmers, most of them dairy farmers.

In the newer towns of Shellharbour and Albion Park, which were together proclaimed a municipality in 1859, the first churches erected were more impressive than those built in earlier decades in the older towns. Shellharbour Church of England, opened on 13 March 1859, was a stone church, while the Presbyterian church opened on 27 November of the same year was a Gothic stone structure, twice the size of the Anglican church, and lasted four times as long. Within two years (15 August 1861) the Catholics opened their stone church, described as 'decidedly the best ecclesiastical edifice in the township'. The Wesleyan church, opened in 1865, was of Shellharbour stone, faced with white stone shipped from Sydney, and the windows were diamond-shaped leadlights - very ecclesiastical! It, too, was described as 'decidedly the best ecclesiastical edifice in the township'. Was this rivalry sectarian one-upmanship or holy emulation?

Very early in the history of Albion Park there was a Presbyterian church for it was described in 1860 as 'the old cabbage tree church'. The Presbyterians replaced it with 'a neat stone building' in 1866. It was not until 25 January 1874 that the Catholics opened the large



All Saints Anglican Church, Albion Park.



St. Paul's Catholic Church, Albion Park.

Church of St. Paul, but it took the Anglicans only three weeks after that to decide that they, too, must have a stone church. The three churches were built in an area close to each other and isolated from the village. Hence the area became known as 'The Churches'.



New St. Paul's Catholic Church, Albion Park (1975).



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Albion Park.

4. CHURCH BUILDING: ROUND II

A notable trend in the older townships was to replace the humble churches or church/schools of the first generation with larger and finer edifices, usually built of stone and set apart for divine worship alone.

TABLE II: SECOND CHURCHES IN ILLAWARRA

	Anglican	Catholic	Presbyterian	Wesleyan Methodist
Wollongong	1859	1849	1938	1854
Dapto	1882	1856	?	1861
Jamberoo	1867	1879	1876	1879
Kiama	1859	1858	1863	1862
Gerringong	1874	1882	?	1870
Nowra	1880	1877	1875	1877

Reporting on Wollongong on 23 August 1879, the *Town and Country Journal* complained of the town's 'broken down appearance', but added, 'Church architecture has made good progress of late years and the town can boast of some really handsome structures'. Foremost among them was Edmund Blacket's 'little gem', St. Michael's Church of England.

St. Michael's, Wollongong

Frederic Barker, who in 1855 succeeded Broughton as Bishop of Sydney, was 'a life-long and unfaltering' Evangelical, and in 1857 he appointed the Rev. Thomas Campbell Ewing, a 'convinced and life-long Evangelical', rector of Wollongong. Seeing immediately that the Corrimal Street St. Michael's, built in 1847, was too small, he convened a public meeting to consider a larger church. The meeting was chaired by William Warren Jenkins, 'the squire of Berkeley', who 'entered into the movement with hearty energy' and himself subscribed 200 pounds on the spot. Delighted, Ewing exclaimed, 'I can by faith see the church on the hill'.

Opened by Barker on 15 December 1859, St. Michael's took only a little over a year to build. This was 'a remarkably short

period of building for a Victorian stone church', observes Morton Herman, adding, 'the citizens of Wollongong must have been what modern slang calls "hustlers"'. What hustled the Anglican citizens were the constant invidious comparisons made by visitors between their architecturally defective Corrimal Street church and the Catholic church. Those comparisons ceased forthwith, for both the site and the architecture of the new St. Michael's are glorious. Of pure Gothic Revival design, it was more pretentious than contemporary country churches, but the 'hustlers' had no doubt that Wollongong would grow. It was designed to seat 324, and could be enlarged, it was said then, to seat 800.



Thomas Campbell Ewing



William Warren Jenkins (1816-1884
taken c.1860.

St. Michael's has 'a completely balanced plan with equal transepts, twin porches, and an octagonal belfry poised atop a central buttress on the western facade' (M. Herman, *The Blackets*, 1963 p.69). It is less ornamental than many Blacket churches, and its external severity of line (especially the easterly or seaward aspect) contrasts with its interior softness and warmth. As such, the church recalls the spirit of the early Protestant pioneers with their strong



St. Michael's Wollongong.

conviction of God as omnipotent judge, combined with a new understanding of God as friend whose kindly providence would aid His servants in their efforts to build a town and nation to His glory in a land flowing with milk and money.

Christ Church, Kiama

Kiama Anglicans, too, felt the need for a new church. The earliest settlers, eager to seize every opportunity to attend church, and to exercise their 'spirit of workmanship' in building same, had erected in 1843, just north of Kiama beach, a quaint little timber church in the Corinthian style of architecture, complete with gables. Serving also as an Anglican denominational school it had no outer walls, and the frame was visible from the outside. It looked like a pioneering church and therefore more appealing to the pioneers and to us than to the second generation. Accordingly, on 13 January 1859, Barker consecrated Christ Church, Kiama, at a new site on the headland, called Church Point, where the noise of the surf was diminished.

The Gothic structure was built of blue metal rubble, so plentiful in the area. The interior walls were plastered in imitation of cut



First Anglican Church, Kiama; built in 1843, it seated 120.



Christ Church Kiama - before the building of the war memorial tower.

stone, and after the first heavy storm the outside walls were plastered also. The plasterers did a thorough job, for the foundation stone has never been sighted since. The interior of the roof was lined in 1872 with cedar uniquely curved and shaped like a ship's hull. The design was attributed, apocryphally, to Captain Samuel Charles, Kiama Churchwarden, who had served with the Kiama Steam Navigation Co. formed in 1853. Charles' contribution to the Christian cause in NSW went beyond possibly shaping the fabric of Christ Church, Kiama. He was elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1877 and opposed Henry Parkes, particularly on the education question. He pleaded for greater attention to religious instruction in state schools, and his views were, in the main, incorporated in the 1880 Act (*Evening News*, 3 August 1899).

The Scots Church, Kiama

Christ Church was no sooner opened than a meeting of Free Church Presbyterians (25 April 1859), galvanised into action by their new minister, the Rev. John Kinross, resolved to build a new church. The editor of *The Kiama Examiner* was pleased that the congregation would no longer have to worship in 'the tumble-down shanty' which, from its proximity to 'the noisy and restless deep', was unsuited for divine worship.

Assessments of Scots Church, opened on 4 March 1863, ranged from 'the most beautiful church in the town' to 'the most beautiful in NSW' and 'highly creditable to the zeal, taste and judgment of its scholarly Pastor and enlightened people'. Dr. Kinross became Principal of St. Andrew's College in the University of Sydney in 1875 and held the position for 26 years, 'one of the brightest and best ornaments' in the history of Australian Pres-



Scots Church, Kiama.

byterianism. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. Robert Menzies, in whose barn at Jamberoo the Rev. John Tall had taken the first Presbyterian services in 1839. Kinross died in his holiday cottage overlooking Jamberoo in 1890, never having severed his links with the parish of which he had been minister for 17 years.

Jamberoo

The principle of 'holy emulation' in church building meant not only that all the denominations opened churches in any town about the same time, and replaced them about the same time, but that they tended to build churches of about the same quality. The opening in 1867 of the Anglican Church of the Resurrection at Jamberoo, a charming Blacket church of Norman design, commenced a new round of church building at Jamberoo: all fine, stone or stone and brick, Gothic churches. St. Stephen's Presbyterian church, Jamberoo, was opened on 26 January 1876, before an exceptionally large crowd of 1500. The previous November the foundation stone of St. Matthew's Catholic church had been laid.

The sight of two lovely Protestant churches already finished,



Jamberoo Anglican Church, c.1917.



Jambersoo Catholic Church.



Jambersoo Methodist Church, c. 1958

and now a Catholic church in course of construction, was too much for the Methodists who, at a meeting in 1877, resolved that their old church, built in 1851, was 'out of architectural harmony with other churches in Jamberoo'. They opened their new freestone church in 1879, six months before the opening of the Catholic church. The financial burden was a heavy one, it was observed at the opening, but necessary, as the Wesleyans were 'half a century behind the times. The stigma is now removed'.



Jamberoo Presbyterian Church.

TABLE III: JAMBEROO CHURCHES
— THE SECOND TIME ROUND

	Date Opened	Cost (pounds)
Church of the Resurrection (C of E)	2 January 1867	1,102
St. Stephen's Presbyterian	26 January 1876	1,061
Methodist	28 March 1879	925
St. Matthew's (RC)	7 September 1879	1,648

Anti-popery, in its ugliest form, was found at Jamberoo in this period, suggesting that not all the emulation was holy. During the building of the Anglican church, a Kiama journalist reported in 1866 that, 'Every attempt at decoration is jealously watched by some who regard external symbol as belonging only to a communion which they seem to regard as the highest proof of piety to hate'. The journalist's veracity was established the following May when stone crosses on the gables of the church were pulled down in the middle of the night, and one was dragged away and smashed to pieces. Residents were shocked at the sacrilege, and a reward of 50 pounds was offered for the arrest of the miscreants. Bishop Barker, though an Evangelical, clearly thought cross demolition was taking anti-popery too far, and himself donated a new cross. But this met a similar fate in January 1867.

Sectarianism, however, was not confined to a lunatic fringe, and Bishop Barker, himself, was implicated in a sectarian conflict at Jamberoo almost a decade later. The occasion was the laying of the foundation stone of St. Matthew's Catholic church by Archbishop Vaughan on 25 November 1875. The Rev. P.R. Spry Bailey, Anglican rector of Jamberoo, invited the Archbishop to take refreshments in the Rectory. Bailey was one of few Anglo-Catholic clergy left in Sydney Diocese fourteen years after the arrival of its Evangelical bishop and, after his appointment to Jamberoo in 1868, had quickly emptied the church with his high-church ornaments and ritualistic practices. Sadly, just a few months later an outbreak of dysentery decimated the children of Jamberoo, and the grieving parishioners resumed their demand for the means of grace.

Friction continued, however, and Barker attempted to reconcile the opposing parties. A letter criticising Bailey's hospitality to a Catholic archbishop appeared in the *Australian Churchman* on 4 December 1875. Barker reprimanded Bailey, which must have been a frightening experience for the latter, since Barker, nicknamed 'the high priest', stood at 6' 5½" tall. The *Sydney Punch*, 1 January 1876, in turn, reprimanded the bishop, in a satirical poem entitled, 'The Bishop (Arch), the Bailey, and the Barker', which ended with the stanza:

MORAL

When'er you see your fellow man in sickness or in need,
Pray for his soul, may that be saved, but don't his body feed,
Prayers cost but little else than time; so never be so rash,
As offer e'er to anyone your food or clothes or cash.

MORAL THE SECOND

Australian Churchman is a name that should respected be,
So should its revered editors from spite and cant be free;
And let its page from hate be free like him of Jamberoo,
Praise charity, how'er bestowed, and *Punch* may then praise you.

5. ILLAWARRA CATHOLIC PIETY

The 1870s was a decade of bitter sectarian rivalry in Australia. To the Protestant majority, who had drunk deep at the well of liberalism - the prevailing philosophy of the age - Catholics were anti-intellectual and obscurantist. Catholic piety had combined with Catholic defensiveness to produce the dogma of Papal Infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870. It was even rumoured that the precise wording of the dogma was the work of Patrick Francis Moran, from 1884 Archbishop of Sydney and, from 1885, Cardinal. Protestants watched aghast but not surprised as popular religious practices, imported from Ireland, now flooded the Australian Catholic Church: Forty Hours adoration, numerous novenas especially to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the rosary, the nine First Fridays, devotions to the Sacred Heart, and various male and female lay sodalities. At least Polding, the Benedictine, had not neglected the head in his appeal to the heart. But now the Catholic Church was awash with sentiment, a ceaseless round of devotional practices devoid of thought and contemplation (O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, p.213).

The Illawarra evidence suggests that this invasion of devotional practices did not come without some resistance from priests and laity. Priests were required to report regularly on the 'State of the Mission' in which they worked. To the question, 'What Confraternities, Sodalties, or other Pious Associations have you in the district?', John Hayes, temporary parish priest of Kiama wrote on 26 December 1877, 'It is one of the blessings of this Mission that there are none'. In response to the question, 'What Benefit Societies are there in connection with your church?', Hayes wrote, 'None, Deo Gratias. I take the liberty to use such words for I know such societies and sodalties to be anything but a benefit to the church and credit to religion'. He added that there were no stations of the cross in churches in his Mission. On 4 February 1878 Father Patrick O'Reilly of Dapto confessed apologetically that his people were not particular about attending Mass on holy days of obligation. Such devotional practices did become a regular feature of Illawarra Catholicism, but not overnight.

6. CONGREGATIONALISM COMES TO ILLAWARRA

Among the finest churches erected in Illawarra during this period was the Congregational church in Market Street, opened on 6 August 1857 and costing 1,496 pounds, a large sum for a church designed to seat only 200. By that time, however, Congregationalists had acquired the habit of doing things well. They were descended from those sixteenth-century Puritans who eventually separated from the Church of England, and were known as Independents, Dissenters, or Nonconformists. Congregationalists of the late eighteenth century married a commitment to independency with the fervour of the Evangelical Revival.

The finest child of this marriage was the London Missionary Society (LMS) formed in 1795. Its missionaries, who laboured in the Pacific Islands, frequently visited Sydney where they were more interested in encouraging individuals than building churches. Hence before 1840 the Congregational cause was not strong in NSW. Early Victorian Britain, however, was the hey-day of Evangelical Nonconformity, and the denomination made gigantic strides. Among its great preachers were the Scot, Ralph Wardlaw, who trained David Livingstone for service with LMS in Africa, John Angell James, the golden-mouthed preacher of Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham,

Congregationalists, however, did not confine their energies to the commercial middle classes. As early as 1857 Charter was conducting services in the rural settlements of Figtree, Unanderra and Dapto and also at the new mining townships of Bulli and Mt. Keira. To the latter we must now turn.



Congregational Church, Gerringong, c.1959.

7. 'COAL IS BETTER THAN GOLD'

While churches were built and rebuilt in the flourishing rural economy south of Wollongong before 1860, none was built to the north where the population remained small and scattered. The development of the coal industry dotted the coastal ribbon above Wollongong with mining townships like beads on a string. Each town represented a relatively closed community with pronounced parochialism, and hence branch churches had to be built in every town.

The Illawarra coal seams had been observed at Coalcliff as early as 1797, but a monopoly on coal production given to the Australian Agricultural Company at Newcastle prevented the development of a coal industry before 1848 when the monopoly was lifted. Captain James Shoober of Mt. Keira, responded immediately and, in 1849, took the first coal to Wollongong Harbour in a procession watched

by 'cheering gentry and respectable farmers'. The procession, sporting banners inscribed 'Advance Illawarra' was led by Captain Shoobert and, local historians have assumed on the basis of a press report (*SME*, 10 September 1849), the Anglican rector of Wollongong, that champion of progress and civilisation. More likely, it was the rector's son.

The Illawarra economy, undermined by the 1840s depression, was further threatened by the gold rushes. NSW's wealthiest capitalist, Henry Osborne, of Marshall Mount, sought a fresh source of profits in the coal industry. Not that the gold rushes had done him any harm: he had made a fortune selling mutton to goldminers! Osborne bought Shoobert out in 1856 and the next year opened the Osborne-Wallsend Mine which produced excellent steaming coal from a higher seam. Osborne also entered into an agreement with Thomas Hale of Woonona to open the Bellambi Mine on land owned, of course, by Osborne. 'The victory is won!' enthused the editor of the *Illawarra Mercury* (21 December 1857), 'and Illawarra is in possession of an article of domestic use and export not second in importance to the richest gold field in the colony ... Our black diamonds will promote commerce and add to our social industry'.



The Bulli Mine, 1871.

Death of Henry Osborne

Osborne certainly anticipated adding to his own wealth, but his life was cut short. For three months he fought a losing battle against 'a diseased stomach'. On 26 February 1859 he was visited by the Methodist minister, James Watkin, who recorded in his diary:

... went to see the richest man in the country Mr. H. Osborne, he is very ill. I hope he will obtain a restness for heaven before he goes hence. He is anxious about that. He is anxious on account of his not having attended to those things while in health.



James Watkin.



John Graham.

During this terminal illness, Watkin and a Methodist local preacher, John Graham, the principal builder of the Dapto Methodist congregation and chapel, ministered to Osborne. Their labours were 'owned of God', and Osborne died peacefully and triumphantly on 26 March 1859. Before he died he asked his family to pay Graham 100 pounds a year for the rest of his life, so that he could devote himself more fully to the Lord's work, and it was done. It was John Graham who, six years later, laid the foundation stone of the handsome Methodist church at Shellharbour and, in the same year at Mt. Kembla, opened the first kerosene shale works in Australia, thus earning the nickname 'the light of the world'. Australians have always loved to parody their more religious mates.

Methodism at Bulli

Coal did not bring the same wealth to Illawarra as gold brought to Ballarat and Bendigo, and no churches were built remotely akin to the incomparable Sacred Heart Cathedral at Bendigo. It brought one gem, however, the Bulli Methodist Church opened in 1865. Bulli Wesleyans first began to worship in private homes: that of James Black in 1846 and George Somerville in 1857. Black and Somerville were related by marriage, and, like John Graham, were both emigrants from Ireland. On 12 July 1858 their minister, James Watkin, recorded in his diary, 'Wollongong and Bulli are cold places. The Irish Methodists are not the lively people I hoped to find them. The English and Australians of Windsor circuit much more to my mind'. A native of Manchester, Watkin preferred the English to the Irish, and perhaps the labouring classes to the gentry, for Bulli Methodism, it should be noted, was established by respectable farmers whose settlement at Bulli predates the opening of the mines. Watkin's experience at Mt. Keira on 19 May 1858 was more to his liking: 'Went to Keira Vale on Friday. A very nice company - miners and others. The 'r' seems difficult to them. The Newcastle burr occurs in the speech of many of them'.

The Bulli miners cannot have objected to the Somervilles too strongly for by 1862, the congregation had grown to 25, too large for Somerville's home. A large barn on the property of William Somerville, manager of the Bulli Colliery from 1863, was converted to a chapel and opened on 27 January 1862, and by October had 60 scholars enrolled in the Sunday School. A meeting in the chapel in August 1863 was so crowded that the preacher, the Rev. William Kelymack, Methodist minister of Wollongong, was reminded of 'herrings in a barrel': children had to leave to make room for adults, and gentlemen, on surrendering their seats to ladies, were forced to the inelegant procedure of extracting their hats from under those same seats. Kelymack urged the building of a new church and even produced plans by Sydney architect, Thomas Rowe, for consideration. The Bulli Methodists had no hope of resisting his appeal, for this future president of Newington College, Sydney, was the finest preacher of his denomination: 'the most noticeable feature ... was the unadorned and perfectly natural beauty of his every phrase. He spoke in poetry and seemed to be incapable of doing anything less beautiful. The poorest of the company were never confounded, but

rather greatly helped by his imagery and the most fastidious were never tempted to suspect any efforts at display' (Colwell, *Illustrated History of Methodism*, p.578).

The Somervilles, however, needed no persuading. Visionary Robert Somerville supported the proposal to build a church much more than sufficient for their present requirements. John Graham and George Somerville selected as the site the hilltop considered the best part of Bulli. Wollongong Wesleyans postponed building a new church and gave generously to the Bulli fund.

The church, costing 900 pounds, was opened on 7 May 1865. Though seating only 150, its commanding site and imposing Gothic design make it look much larger. Built of stone outside and plastered rubble inside, it was the finest stone Methodist chapel in Illawarra. The leaded glass windows are diamond shaped and the roof of cedar was covered with shingles. Admiration was unrestrained:

Its size and beauty and consequently its costliness are objects which will be a source of astonishment to all under whose observation it may come ... The building quite outshines any place of worship in Illawarra out of Wollongong and most of those even in town must rank second to it in size and architecture. The erection of so grand an edifice for such a noble purpose speaks volumes in favour of the people of Bulli (quoted in W.A. Bayley, *Black Diamonds History of Bulli District*, 1975, p.26).



Bulli Methodist Church and passage, c.1913.

So stunning was the effect of this edifice, and so strong was Methodism's hold on the new mining community, that the usual effect of denominational emulation was not observable at Bulli for another 15 years. The denominations all arrived at about the same time, but not in the same style. Anglicans continued to meet in their denominational school opened in 1856, while the Congregationalists and Presbyterians met at the School of Arts in Woonona in 1861, although the Presbyterians built modest structures at Woonona in 1864 and 1871. Catholics met in an even humbler slab church/school built in 1863. The only real competition for the Wesleyans came from another branch of Methodism, the Primitive Methodists.

8. PRIMITIVE METHODISM COMES TO ILLAWARRA

The Primitive Methodist Society, instituted in England in 1811, was the product of revivalism and the desire to allow greater powers to the laity. From 1808, Lord Sidmouth, Home Secretary, had attempted to outlaw Methodism really because it was making such inroads on the Anglican Establishment, but ostensibly because Methodists were prospective revolutionaries. The Wesleyans insisted on their respectability and curtailed open-air preaching, tent missions and women preachers. The Primitive Methodists considered this a betrayal of Wesley's historic mission to the poor.

Revivalist preaching and lay activism, then, characterised the Primitives in England and Australia, where they first took root in South Australia in the 1840s. The movement spread to NSW in 1845, almost collapsed in its first decade, and then slowly consolidated its membership until, in 1902, it united with the Wesleyans. It was strongest in the rural areas of Goulburn, Crookwell, Mudgee, Kempsey and Camden, and the mining areas of Newcastle, Lithgow, Illawarra and Broken Hill. In Illawarra the Primitive Methodist strongholds were Mt. Keira in the 1860s, Bulli and Mt. Kembla in the 1880s and 1890s (all coal mining settlements), while the Wesleyans were stronger in the rural and town sections of the community.

The first evidence of Primitive Methodist activity, however, was in that very rural and apparently very religious valley of Jamberoo. In 1858 a Jamberoo branch was formed with 41 members, rising quickly to 76 members the next year when a small chapel was opened at Foxground. The first recorded camp meeting was held at Mt.

Keira in 1859 in a paddock belonging to William Robson, mine manager and Primitive Methodist local preacher. It followed the pattern, perfected on the American Frontier and imported into England, of a series of services, with sermons delivered by the minister and lay preachers, interspersed with singing and praying. The camp meeting, which began at 10 a.m. and concluded at 9 p.m. with that other distinctive Methodist custom - the love feast -, was reported to be more numerously attended than expected by members of all the dissenting denominations (*JM*, 1 December 1859). By the 1860s the Primitives were said to be in 'fierce competition' with the Church of England at Mt. Keira, though it was always understood that the entertainment they provided (nearly all there was to be enjoyed at Mt. Keira) was all the better for the rivalry (*JHSB*, September 1980).

A new station was formed in the town of Wollongong in 1863, and the next year the Rev. Thomas Mell was appointed first minister. A brick chapel was opened in Wollongong on 12 December 1869, but the cause languished in the 1870s, and the chapel was sold. At Bulli, however, in the heart of the mining district, the Primitives fared better. Meeting first in the School of Arts at Woonona, they began to build a chapel in 1867. In 1880 it was said to be 'like a Jewish tabernacle, very shabby, and situated in the centre of a bare paddock'. It was also known as Noah's Ark and was pulled down in 1885 when the trustees built a brick chapel.

The cause was always hampered by the paucity of lay leaders and, most importantly, by the mobility of its ordinary members so dependent for employment on economic vicissitudes. Churches do better with stationary members, but Wesley would have been gratified that the Primitive Methodists were rarely motivated merely by a desire to build a strong denomination.

9. EARLY REVIVALS

Australia has experienced few religious revivals. Of all the denominations, Methodism, born of John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival, most encouraged its members to pray for and expect revivals. We have seen (chapter 2) how revival first came to Illawarra through the instrumentality of John Vidler, Wesleyan local preacher at Dapto. It came again through the Rev. Thomas Angwin, superintendent of the Kiama Methodist Circuit from 1854 to 1856, and

a man 'of weak physique, marked already by consumption as its prey, but of apostolic if not scraphic fervour'. His sermons revealed a knowledge 'of the deep things of God', and congregations and prayer meetings grew in number, swelled by Presbyterians and Anglicans whenever opportunity allowed. On 'one of the later Sundays' in July 1864 the revival came:

The arrows were sharp in the hands of the King's messenger that night. They were straightly aimed, and shot with all the intensity of a love baptised with the compassion of the Christ...The next night there was almost equally as large a congregation at the prayer meeting. Then began what the good old people called 'a breaking down'. The communion rail was crowded with seekers. Some hoar-headed men were amongst them; a storekeeper in the town, notorious for his fearful temper and furious conduct when under its influence, some gentle-spirited women; a number of senior lads and girls from the Sunday schools...Night after night for the rest of the week and into the middle of the next, the meetings continued...It was a revival that gave workers to the Church, teachers to the Sunday school, local preachers to the circuit plan and ultimately several ministers to the Australian Methodist Church (J.E. Carruthers, *Memoirs of an Australian Ministry*, 1922, p.32).

The organising genius behind English Methodism, Jabez Bunting (1779-1858), believed that, through prayer, man could co-operate with God to promote revival, and that the experience of revival could become the normal experience of the whole denomination. Previously understood as unpredictable acts of God, revivals, it was now believed, could be organised. In Illawarra mining centres the Methodists attempted to institutionalise revivalism through special evangelistic services and the tent-meeting, which the Wesleyans in colonial Australia, unlike their English counterparts, supported as enthusiastically as the Primitives. Indeed, organising for revivals was an important focus of interdenominational activity for ministers and laymen of all Protestant denominations. The 1902 revival in NSW - arguably the greatest in Australian history - was an interdenominational tent mission.

The special revivalist services held at Bulli in April 1877 for the Bulli Wesleyan Methodist society were considered so successful in terms of conversion and renewed spiritual life that other societies followed suit, with similar success (*Christian Advocate*, 21 July 1877). The Wollongong Circuit Quarterly meeting expressed 'its devout thankfulness to Almighty God for thus bestowing revival blessings

upon us' and expected in the following year to 'enjoy a yet larger manifestation of divine favour', which they did. In the three years 1876-79 circuit membership tripled.

Not every manifestation of revival was acceptable to the respectable Wollongong churches. One William Rowles was charged with disturbing the congregation in the Wollongong Presbyterian church at an evening meeting. The minister, J.A. Stuart, gave evidence that the defendant sang the hymns very loudly and out of tune, and in the course of the prayers, made such remarks as 'hear, hear' and 'That will stand good against the world'. The case was dismissed by the two justices of the peace on the grounds that Rowles' remarks were not uttered contemptuously, but rather in 'a fit of religious fervency' (*IM*, 30 July 1876).

Religion and Regional Progress

The author, Anthony Trollope, visited Australia in 1871/2 and recorded his impressions of colonial Christianity: 'wherever there is a community there arises a church, or more commonly churches ... The people are fond of building churches' (*Australia*, 1873, 1967 reprint, p.240). This was true of Illawarra before 1880 when church-building was an index of community progress and civic-mindedness as well as of devotion and zeal. Church-building is more public spirited than drinking spirits in public houses, and Henry Parkes, MLA for Kiama 1864-70, made explicit the impact of the churches on Kiama when he observed, 'there were more places for the worship of God than there were public houses. It was no wonder that a district like that produced noble men and women'. In its ratio of churches to pubs (five to two in 1867), Kiama was probably exceptional in Illawarra. There is little doubt, however, that a significant proportion of settlers were prepared to support the denominations familiar to them, and accepted the leadership of the clergy in civic affairs.

Voluntaryism and denominationalism, then, do not appear to have weakened the churches. Concentration on church growth and the identification of the welfare of the church with regional progress, created a conservative religious society. The churches of Illawarra, Protestant and Catholic, have always been conservative in theology, and social and moral values. This has not always meant conservatism

in politics, however. As industrial conflict developed with the coming first of the mines, and then of heavy industry, church members have frequently sided with labour, while clergy, with a commendable sensitivity to the prophetic role of their office, have attempted to build bridges between capital and labour. To these developments we must now turn.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Nowra - the spire was never built
Illustrated Sydney News, 12 November, 1875.

PART II

THE MINING AGE: THE METHODIST HEGEMONY

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BOOM DECADE

1880–1889

TABLE OF EVENTS

1880-1889

1880

Public Instruction Act - abolished State Aid to church schools.

Opening of Illawarra Mutual Building Society.

Second St. James' Foxground (C of E) built.

11 January - All Saints, Nowra (C of E) opened (temporary church).

21 July - Osborne Memorial (C of E), Dapto, foundation stone laid.

12 May - Sisters of St. Joseph arrive at Dapto to found convent of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart.

Second Marshall Mt. Methodist Church opened much closer to Albion Park.

15 December - Wesleyan Methodist Church, Wollangong, foundation stone laid.

1881

August - Bulli constituted a separate C of E Parish.

11 September - St. Joseph's Catholic School/Church opened at Bulli.

21 September - Foundation stone of convent and school at Albion Park laid.

1882

Kangaroo Valley C of E Parish constituted.

15 November - St. Luke's Dapto (C of E) opened.

13 December - St. Augustine's Bulli (C of E) opened.

- 6 August - *St. Mary's Star of the Sea, (RC) Gerringong, opened.*
- St. Paul's RC school, Albion Park, opened.*
- Wesley Church, Wollongong, opened.*
- May - *Sherbrooke (Upper Bulli) Union Church, opened.*

1883

Mt. Kembla Mine opened.

1884

- 18 June - *Kiama Pioneer Butter Factory, first co-operative butter factory, opened.*
- Helensburgh Mine opened.*
- Alfred Barry appointed Anglican Bishop of Sydney.*
- Patrick Francis Cardinal Moran appointed Catholic Archbishop of Sydney.*
- 22 October - *Emmanuel school/church C of E opened at Clifton.*
- 21 March - *Cardinal Moran blessed convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph at Jamberoo (rented cottage).*
- St. Patrick's RC Church built at Clifton.*
- St. Patrick's RC Church, Berry opened.*
- 13 April - *Wesleyan Methodist Church, Berry, opened.*
- Primitive Methodist Church, Mt. Kembla, opened.*
- Congregational Sunday School opened at Keiraville.*
- Salvation Army came to Wollongong.*

1885

First Catholic Plenary Council.

23 April - St. Luke's (C of E) Berry, opened.

St. Andrew's, Crawley Forest (C of E) opened - moved to Bombo in 1912.

New Primitive Methodist church opened at Campbell Street, Wollongong.

23 August - New Primitive Methodist church opened at Bulli.

1886

North Bulli Mine opened.

24 March - New Shellharbour C of E (St. Paul's) opened.

Tarrawanna C of E Church built.

Bulli RC Parish separated from Wollongong

June - Salvation Army commenced permanent work in Wollongong.

1887

January - North Illawarra Mine opened, Austinmer.

23 March - Bulli Mine disaster.

June - Sydney to Illawarra railway opened.

17 January - St. James, Foxground (C of E) licensed.

St. Hallows, Otford (C of E) opened.

Jamberoo Catholic School closed.

4 June - Bulli-Woonona Salvation Army formed.

1888

South Bulli, Metropolitan (Helenzburgh) and Bellambi Mines opened.

24 coke ovens opened at Unanderra and 40 at Bulli.

St. Joseph's RC church, Kangaroo Valley, built.

Albion Park Presbyterian Parish commenced (included Dapto, Unanderra and Mt. Kembla).

Presbyterian Church built, Mt. Kembla.

Bombo Union Sunday School opened by William Somerville (Methodist).

1889

Corrimal Mine opened.

St. Patrick's College Manly opened to train Catholic priests.

Presbyterian Church Wollongong erected a lecture hall - used it as Sunday School.

New brick Wesleyan Church built at Mt. Keira.

Congregationalists commenced Sunday School at Port Kembla (continued to 1903).

Church extension boomed in the 1880s along with the economy. In addition to the opening of impressive churches in Wollongong and Dapto, the denominations reached into the coal mining district north of Wollongong, usually opening humble branch churches. At Bulli, in the heart of the coal district, more permanent churches were erected by the Anglicans, Catholics, and Primitive Methodists. The churches were the chief source of a surprisingly rich cultural life in the mining districts, and the clergy attempted to mediate in disputes between capital and labour, and sought to bring consolation to a community ravaged by a pit disaster of appalling magnitude. A new denomination, the Salvation Army, came to Illawarra in the wake of the disaster, and engaged the Wollongong municipal authorities in a legal battle. In 1888 NSW celebrated its centenary and churchmen attempted to voice and shape the aspirations of Australians for the new century.

1. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND RECORD CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

In the heady 1880s the NSW economy boomed, and Illawarra, by-passed by the gold rushes of the 1850s, now shared in the great wealth and greater optimism engendered. In 1890 the South Coast region of NSW produced half of the State's 18 million pounds of butter, ensuring the continued prosperity of the southern part of Illawarra. To the north and west of Wollongong the coal industry expanded spectacularly. Six new mines were opened during the decade: Mt. Kembla 1883; North Bulli 1886; Metropolitan, South Bulli, Bellambi 1888; Corrimal 1889. These, together with the opening of the Illawarra railway to Sydney in 1887 and the erection of jetties at Port Kembla and Bellambi, gave the district a greatly expanded capacity to produce and transport coal. Output of Illawarra coal increased from 240,211 tons in 1880 to 701,572 tons in 1889. In the middle of the decade the editor of the *Illawarra Mercury* enthused:

The trade having attained its present colossal magnitude, its onward and upward progress to dimensions of which the most sanguine specialists of the present day have no idea will be as certain as that day follows night (*IM*, 3 September 1885).

For the churches of NSW the 1880s was a boom decade, too. The number of church buildings increased by 736 in the decade compared with an increase of 434 in the 1870s and 294 in the 1890s. The average number of people attending church services increased weekly by 42% which was behind the population increase of 49%, but the number of children attending Sunday School, which was now a focus of Protestant activity, increased by 61%.

TABLE IV
CHURCH GROWTH IN NSW 1881, 1890

	No. of Churches & Chapels	No. of Ministers	Ave. no. of Attendees (excludes children)	No of Sunday Schools	No of Sunday School Teachers	Ave. no Attending Sunday School	Population
1881	1,389	739	221,031	1,468	9,289	75,672	751,468
1890	2,125	1,063	314,979	1,840	12,019	121,885	1,121,860

(Source: NSW Statistical Registers)

Wealthy Wesleyans

In the town of Wollongong, land prices and subdivisions, which had remained dormant from 1834, when the town was first surveyed, until 1879, increased sharply and the Illawarra Mutual Building Society was formed in 1880, largely at the behest of William Robson, its first chairman and a prominent Wesleyan. Robson was typical of the Wesleyans prominent in commercial affairs in Wollongong. He came to the colony in 1841 under engagement to the Australian Agricultural Company as a miner and became in 1857 manager of Mt. Keira Colliery and in 1871 manager of the Bulli mine. He was mayor of Wollongong 1867/68. Before leaving England he had experienced religious conversion after reading *Call to the Unconverted* written by the Puritan, Richard Baxter. Described as belonging to 'the good old class of Methodists', he improved every opportunity, commercial and spiritual, and was a local preacher for 45 years before his death in 1888.



John Bright

Another prominent Wollongong Wesleyan was John Bright, who is reported to have died worth 55,000 pounds, most of which he bequeathed to the Wesleyan Church. On 15 December 1880 his wife, Catherine, laid the foundation stone for a new Wesleyan church in Crown Street, the third to be built in Wollongong. The sentiments she expressed on that occasion reflect the values of prosperous Wesleyans, whose denomination was then reaching the zenith of its influence in NSW:

... I pray and trust that many souls will find the Saviour in this church ... This will be a beautiful church. A few people have said that the old church was good enough for us. Well perhaps it was, when we could not afford a better one. But when people can substitute buggies for carts, and fine houses for huts, they should not forget the Giver of all good gifts, or allow His House to remain the worst. Then we have a good precedent in Solomon. He was the wisest man that ever lived, and he built the most splendid and costly Temple which has ever been heard of for the worship of God; and we read he commenced to build it before he built his own house; and God was well pleased with him for doing so, and as He is unchangeable, we know that He will be well pleased with us if we work for his Honour and Glory.

The Church, seating 350, cost 2,700 pounds and is built of Mt. Keira sandstone. The gable of its elegant facade is ornamented with five pinnacles, and the windows, of the geometrical decorated order, are made of cathedral glass. Wesley Church, however, is not properly understood merely as a monument to wealthy Methodists with a taste for the beautiful. Of all the Wollongong churches, its site is closest to the heart of Wollongong, and its ministry, based on the ideals of John Wesley himself, has been characterised by compassion and practical concern for the needy.



Wollongong Methodist Church before addition of porch.

Osborne Memorial Church of St. Luke, Dapto

On 15 November 1882 the most expensive church yet built in Illawarra was opened at Dapto. In the Romanesque style, St. Luke's cost 4,000 pounds and was designed by Canadian-born John Horbury Hunt, who worked for Edmund Blacket until 1869. Hunt has been described as 'the only architect of genius to practise in Australia in the nineteenth century'. He was 50 years ahead of his time, and St. Luke's so defied architectural convention for an ecclesiastical edifice, that the usual journalistic rapture was withheld by the *Illawarra Mercury* in its report (17 November 1882) of the opening:

... the interior of the building more especially is sternly stiff and cheerless, the severe outlines of the architecture being intensified almost into cavern coldness by the subdued if not somewhat inadequate light which the narrow windows with their cathedral glass afford. Of plaster, paint, colouring or varnish, there is not a vestige to be seen within the building, and as if to match the network of naked and rustic-like beams and rafters overhead, the aisle is floored with dull coloured common bricks. However, all these features are mere matters of taste, which differs almost as much as do faces.

In 1970 Professor John Freeland claimed of St. Luke's that the 'very points of adverse criticism ... are the source of its strengths and virtues'. He concluded that it is 'undoubtedly the finest of Hunt's brick churches (excluding the cathedrals)' (*Architect Extraordinary*, 1970, p.71). St. Luke's was built in memory of Henry and Sarah Osborne by their children of whom it was said, on Henry's death, that they must have been very meek for they inherited the earth. Dean W. Cowper, at the opening, was not so disrespectful, and he made the interesting observation that 'the example of



Osborne Memorial Church, Depto.

Christian liberality by the Osborne family in erecting so costly a church at their own expense was unique within the Diocese of Sydney, if not throughout the colony'. It is worth emphasising just how exceptional the Osborne Memorial Church is in this respect. We have already seen how quickly churches came whenever communities developed, and how quickly they were improved or replaced whenever wealth increased. But they rarely came without considerable personal sacrifice from a significant proportion of church members. Their faith was sufficient to evoke the sacrifice although, as Trollope observed in 1871/72, they were 'unfortunately less addicted to pay annually for their clergyman than to defray the cost of their churches'. The religious faith of Australians has always expressed itself more readily in paying for buildings than in paying for ministry.

Church Building on the Coal Fields

There are honourable exceptions to the frequently-heard generalisation that church-building was the preserve of the wealthy gentry and the middle classes. The greatest church builders were Catholics and they were mostly working class in the nineteenth century. On 25 November 1884 Father J. Hayes wrote to Cardinal Moran about the men labouring on the Wollongong to Sydney railway:

There are about eighty navvies at the railway works at Clifton — the poor fellows are anxious to leave some monument of their piety after them and are ready to build a church at Clifton. (Letters, Bulli File, St. Mary's Archives).

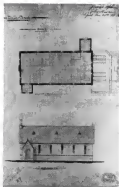
And they did. St. Joseph's, Clifton, was opened before the end of the year.

The brisk coal trade of the 1880s and the consequent increase in population encouraged the denominations to emulate the Wesleyans and build churches at Bulli. The Catholics built a brick school/church to seat 100 at a cost of 400 pounds. Opened on 13 February 1882 the school was conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Something of the speed with which the Catholics moved is evidenced by a letter written to Cardinal Moran by a Bulli settler on 15 December 1884. Allowing for exaggeration, it suggests that in building in 1882 the Catholics were anticipating needs rather than responding to them after they had arisen:

... two years ago I was the only Irish Catholic in the township and there were not a dozen in the district. Now through the goodness of God we have over 300 on the Railway works which may last three years yet and a great many more settled permanently in the district (Bulli File, St. Mary's Archives).

A quarter of a century later the Catholics moved to a new site in Park Road, east of the Anglican Church.

St. Augustine's Church of England, Bulli, a Blacket church said by Morton Herman to be 'more innocent than interesting', was opened on 13 December 1882. Though built of brick on a stone foundation with a shingled roof and seating 230, the church cost



Illuminated Address presented to Blacket's plans of St. Augustine's Bulli.
H.S. Fry.

only 800 pounds. St. Augustine's was blessed with the support of local shopkeeper, Henry Strange Fry, who dominated civic life in the district from 1857 when he opened Woonona's first store. He was churchwarden for twenty years from 1881, as well as choirmaster, Sunday School Superintendent, lay reader, and synod representative. St. Augustine's was consecrated by the newly-appointed Bishop of Sydney, Alfred Barry, on 24 October 1884. On this, his first visit outside of Sydney, Barry also consecrated churches at Coalcliff and Clifton in the coalfields, as well as the Osborne Memorial Church, Dapto, and the Church of the Resurrection, Jamberoo, both in dairying country.

Back at Bulli, the Primitive Methodists vacated their 'Jewish tabernacle' and opened a new brick chapel in 1885, which many years later became the headquarters of the Bulli Workers' Club and is still standing.

2. THE 'TRUE PRIMITIVE FIRE' AT BULLI

The success of Primitive Methodism in Illawarra in the last two decades of the nineteenth century must be attributed to a combination of propitious sociological conditions (more stable coal mining communities) and lay activism. The Rev. J. Spalding, appointed minister of Illawarra Primitive Methodists in 1880, described his flock as 'a godly group', although scattered. They 'enjoyed the true Primitive fire', he wrote, thus

showing their religion is of that caste which is neither quenched by the Pacific nor evaporated by the heat of this sunny land, their hearts still being aglow with Jesus' name. Nor did they hide their light under a bushel, but on our coming we found they had regular services in the houses. They were breaking up fallow ground (*New South Wales Primitive Methodist Messenger*, 2.1, April 1880).

Of this 'godly group' three were local preachers who committed themselves to a heavy preaching load of one or two services every Sunday plus one weeknight meeting every week during the period April to June 1880. The purpose was to re-establish the denomination which had languished in the 1870s. The combination of committed local preachers and a minister resulted in a firmly established and growing movement. Two of the local preachers were long-term residents and were able to provide continuity of leadership. By 1883 membership had grown to 43 with a further six on trial. By 1902, when the Primitives united with the Wesleyans, there were 123 members. Membership signified far more than mere attendance, and the Primitive Methodists attracted to their services and concerts many who did not take out membership. In the mining townships of Bulli, Coalcliff, Mount Pleasant, and Mount Kembla there were active congregations. In 1883 in Campbell Street, Wollongong, the Primitives opened the first of five church buildings erected in the region in the twenty years before union with the Wesleyans.

The Diary of a Methodist Miner

Illawarra mining townships typically had five churches: Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist. Other community institutions included schools of arts, lodges, reading rooms, debating societies, sporting clubs, bands and choirs, co-operative stores, progress associations, and workmen's clubs. These

provided the population with a surprisingly rich religious, cultural, political and recreational life. An insight into this richness and the centrality of the churches in it is afforded by the diary of a Bulli miner, William Wynn (1846-1932).

Wynn resigned membership of the Bulli Wesleyan Church and joined the Primitives as a full member on 9 December 1883. His attendance at Wesleyan activities hardly appears to have abated, however. He regularly attended the annual examinations of the Sunday School pupils at the Bulli Wesleyan Church. With about 250 on the rolls the Sunday School was reputedly 'one of the largest outside of Sydney'. The pupils were publicly examined in Scripture and catechism, after which they sang, to the accompaniment of stringed instruments, to an uncomfortably packed congregation. The pupils were then rewarded with the annual Sunday School picnic, typically attended by 600 parents and children as well as 'the youth and beauty of Bulli'. The mine would remain idle for the day and people of all denominations attended. '... the day was all that could be desired', remarked Wynn of the 1883 picnic, 'every-think passed of verry fair'.

Wynn also supported tea meetings at the Anglican Church and concerts at the Catholic Church. In June 1883 he co-operated with Hugh Walker Taylor, Anglican rector of Bulli, in establishing a Young Men's Mutual Society. He rejoiced not only in the liquor which flowed at the Orange Lodge dinner at Mr. Dudley's Star of the Sea hotel in Wollongong, but also at every success of the temperance campaigners in winning subscribers to the pledge of total abstinence. 'The Blue Ribbon Army temperance lecturer, Mrs. E. Brown', he wrote on 7 February 1885, 'is doing good work at Wollongong and Bulli. Between 200 and 300 have taken the Blue Ribbon'.

The 'Drink Question'

Temperance was considered by American evangelists who visited Australia in the 1880s to be 'the handmaid of the Church', and appeals to pledge one's life to Christ and to abstinence featured in many revival meetings. (W. Phillips, *Defending 'a Christian Country'*, 1981, p.67). Wynn recorded in his diary for 15 September 1883, that, 'the Primitives held a Love feast in the evening at little church

and 12 Penetients (sic) found peace and on Wednesday Evening they formed a Blue Ribbon Army'. Nevertheless, Wynn reported 'a little confusion' when one temperance lecturer asserted that 'no man was fit to preach or lead a class that was not a staunch total abstainer'.

Wynn was probably typical of the working class at that time in that he maintained that moderate drinking is compatible with respectability. On the other hand, there is evidence that many residents believed that the community could not be holy if it were not also dry. Applications for liquor licences were always hotly contested, and Mt. Kembla, for example, was granted no liquor licence until 1896 although the mine opened in 1883. As early as 11 August 1879 one exasperated Justice of the Peace wrote to the Police Magistrate in Wollongong, A.A. Turner, complaining of

that species of vulgar fanaticism called temperance, the votaries of which, although so far from abiding are certainly the most intemperate clan in the community, and are more adapted, with these (sic) ever recurring concerts and holidays, to be citizens of Catholic states, such as California before the Mexican conquest, than of an English Commonwealth. Believe me the ultimate consummation (sic) of vulgar English fanaticism is Mormonism (*Illawarra Historical Society Bulletin*, March 1974, p.5)

Incidentally, the Mormons, or Latter Day Saints, were established in Australia from 1874 when American missionaries began to labour, particularly on the NSW north coast.

Temperance was not merely a Methodist obsession. The Catholic clergy, who had first brought temperance societies to Illawarra in the 1840s, maintained their support for the movement. When Father Augustus W. Petre left Albion Park in 1882 his farewell letter to his young parishioners was printed as a small pamphlet. He exhorted his readers 'to take the pledge not to touch a drop of intoxicating liquor INSIDE A PUBLIC HOUSE until you are AT LEAST THIRTY' (the emphasis is his). With that Catholic genius for accommodation, however, he added that if this were asking too much they should at least refrain from the odious practice of 'shouting until they were twenty-five' (*A Few Farewell Words*). Apparently the Catholic laity, like William Wynn, were 'greatly given to drink and yet great supporters of temperance movements'. There was, however, an important difference between Catholic and Protestant temperance

societies: the former emphasised self-control; the latter campaigned for state control through legislation.

Spiritualism at Bulli

Mining communities were visited by secularist and spiritualist lecturers. The Primitive Methodist minister, Sam Gilby, declared war on spiritualists and Jesuits alike, and William Wynn was one who looked forward to hearing his lecture on spiritualism on 15 October 1887. Spiritualism is the belief in psychic contact with the dead. Perhaps its appeal was then at its height in Bulli because, only six months earlier, the Bulli mine disaster took many lives, including that of John Thomas, Wynn's 16 year-old son. Interest in Spiritualism revived again in Australia after World War I when 59,000 were removed from human contact by death. What World War I was to the Australian community as a whole, the Bulli mine disaster was to the North Illawarra community.

The disaster came at the end of a 6-month coal strike which had smashed the Illawarra Miners Union, and Wynn's diary reveals that bitterness between union miners and strike-breaking 'blacklegs' penetrated church congregations. On 2 January 1887 'some 5 or 6 individuals' left the Bulli Primitive Methodist Church rather than worship with blacklegs. On 6 March 1887 there was a similar walk-out from the Wesleyan Church. This rift in the social fabric made more difficult the role of the churches in promoting healing after the disaster.

3. DISASTER

At 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 23 March 1887 an explosion in the Bulli mine killed 81 men and boys instantaneously. Described as 'the most appalling work of death yet written on the pages of Australian history' (*SMH*, 25 March 1887), the disaster left 50 widows, 150 orphans, and 30 unborn children who would be fatherless. The nation was shocked at a mining calamity on such an unprecedented scale, and many Illawarra residents, identifying with the sufferers as often happens in mining communities, exhibited symptoms of bereavement as if they themselves had suffered. The whole population of Wollongong, observed the Congregationalist minister, E.T. Miles, seemed to be grieving over the disaster: 'people stood in groups here and there solemnly discussing the appalling results of what

had happened'. The role of the clergy was three-fold: to bury the dead and counsel the bereaved; to encourage the creation of, and giving to, relief funds; to interpret and give meaning to an event which defied community comprehension.

The Funerals

Most of the bodies were recovered on Thursday, the day after the disaster, and buried on Friday. They were conveyed on rough carts to three cemeteries. In some carts coffins were piled four high, with the name of the victim written in chalk on the lid. Nine Roman Catholics were buried in the nearest consecrated Catholic ground at Fairy Meadow. A further eleven victims, who were known to be Presbyterians, were buried in the churchyard of the Presbyterian Church at Woonona. The remaining 61 - Anglicans, Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists, and the unidentified - were buried in St. Augustine's Church of England Cemetery, opened in 1878. Nine coffins were buried with the word 'unknown' chalked on them. It is interesting that Methodist ministers buried two victims at the Presbyterian cemetery, but were allowed to bury none at the Anglican cemetery. Wesleyans and Primitives, then, were buried according to the rites of the Church of England.

The burial operation at Bulli, like most activities in the town, was supervised by H.S. Fry, churchwarden and J.P. When the digging of graves could not keep pace with the speed of the arrivals of the coffins, and twenty had accumulated, lying alongside each other on the grass around St. Augustine's, Fry engaged 80 men in the digging operation.

The rector of Bulli, H.W. Taylor, was in Sydney just about



Hugh Walker Taylor.

to board a ship for England when he received the news. Many of the victims were his personal friends including William Walker, a member of the church committee. Taylor hurried back to Bulli and was there appalled by the sight: 'the churchyard has the appearance of part of a gold diggings where there had been a rush, the ground showing so much upturned earth as the 60 bodies were interned'.

The last body was brought to the surface on Saturday. It was identified, by means of his token, as that of Hans Olsen. The positive identification of Olsen's body created a dilemma because it had been believed that his body had been recovered already and buried the previous day.

As if problems of identification were not enough, the task of the clergy was made more difficult by the intrusion at the funerals of the industrial bitterness engendered by the strike. Many of the miners who lost their jobs in the strike and were not taken back had rushed into the mine to save the blacklegs who had displaced them. This was splendid, but then, much to the horror of the majority in the mining community, the widows of the blacklegs were treated cruelly. At Fairy Meadow, where Dr. Sheehy officiated at the burial of the Catholic victims, all the coffins were brought in procession into the cemetery except one, which was left at the entrance gate. The priest asked the distressed widow and daughter of the victim why the coffin was not allowed to join the procession. 'Oh, sir!', the widow replied, 'my husband was despised by the miners in life; he was called a blackleg! and now I am alone, alone in my grief and sorrow'. Dr. Sheehy ordered that the coffin be brought into the procession. The mourners hesitated. 'In the name of charity', cried the priest, 'bring the coffin into the procession'.

To the Bulli community St. Augustine's cemetery acquired the aura of a sacred site, ennobled by the blood of victims of an industry always dangerous though always essential. As one local poet wrote:

Tread softly mourners, round the graves that keep
The Bulli miners in their last sad sleep;
Tho' simple toilers underneath the earth,
Such are the sinews of a nation's worth.

To study the sentiments expressed on the victims' headstones

is to find oneself speculating on how the survivors coped. For some the consolation of the Christian faith was very real:

Grieve not dear wife for I'm at rest,
Grieve not dear children for I'm blest,
Grieve not dear friends I've left a world of care
To meet my God — to follow me prepare.

For others, there appears to have been no consolation:

When we see the tender blossoms
That we tended with such care,
Rudely taken from our bosom,
How our aching hearts despair.

All had received an awful reminder that in the midst of life they were in death, but, in spite of the best efforts of the churches which, as we have seen, were zealous for the eternal welfare of their hearers, not all discerned life in the midst of death.

Relief Funds

The clergy took a prominent part in the public meetings convened to launch appeals for bereaved relatives. At the Sydney Town Hall meeting held on Monday, 28 March, to establish the Bulli Colliery Disaster Fund, there were ten speeches, half of them by clergy: Archdeacon W. Cowper; Richard Sellors, President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference; James Jefferis, minister of Pitt Street Congregational Church; John M. Ross, 'General Agent' of the Presbyterian Church; and Rabbi Davis.

On the same evening a meeting at the Wollongong Town Hall established the Bulli Disaster Relief Fund. The Rev. T.C. Ewing, Church of England rector of Wollongong, was the first of the clergy to speak. He assured his hearers that, terrible as this calamity was, there would be some good coming from it: it would be the means of securing legislation whereby proper provision would be made for the safety of miners. In this Ewing was correct, although it must have distressed him that it took eight years of tough political infighting before a new mines regulation Act was passed.

Dr. Sheehy claimed that 20,000 pounds would be insufficient

to provide for the widows and 'many little children who would require attention for some years to come'. He was still shaken by his experience in the Fairy Meadow Cemetery for he remarked that 'not only were some of these unfortunate men persecuted in life, but their widows were now being persecuted'. He enjoined upon the trustees of the Fund the responsibility of being 'totally firm and just' in the distribution of the monies, and that widows of black-legs should receive equal treatment with the other widows.

The Primitive Methodist Minister, Thomas Davies, also spoke, depicting the heartrending scenes he had witnessed among the bereaved. He reported having endeavoured to cheer all to whom he spoke by telling them that, however they might grieve for the loss of their relatives, they need not fear for the future, as the public would provide their support.

Memorial Services

Sermons on the disaster were preached in all the churches on the Sunday following the funerals. Copious reports of the sermons were given in the *Illawarra Mercury* (29 March 1887). They are here treated in some detail because they afford a rare insight into the mind of the clergy wrestling to 'improve' the opportunity and to offer some theological explanation of God's purposes in calamity.

St. Michael's, Wollongong, was draped in black. The 'Dead March' was played on the grand organ 'in a most feelingly pathetic manner'. Ewing's text was Job 22.21, 'Acquaint NOW thyself with him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee'.

At St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, the Rev. W.H. Waugh began by mentioning the heart-rending scenes he had witnessed. On recollecting a young widow clasping her husband's coffin and pleading to be allowed to have a last look at his face, a plea which was disallowed as he was so mutilated, Waugh broke down. He turned his attention to the two great needs plainly revealed by the disaster: first, to show practical assistance and sympathy to the helpless widows and fatherless children, and second, to put one's own house in order. How many of those 81 men who had gone into the mine on Wednesday morning in the strength and vigour of manhood thought for a moment that they would be launched into eternity

before evening? Who could say how many of them had been prepared to meet their God, and how many souls had been lost and how many saved? None of them ever intended that their souls should be lost; they only put the matter of salvation off for a more convenient day. He urged his hearers to repent of their sins and to give their hearts to Jesus and to live pure, holy and noble lives, so that when their time came to meet their Maker, as come it would, they should be found prepared and acceptable in the sight of the Lord.

Later that same day, Waugh preached at the crowded Woonona Presbyterian Church which was draped in black. He had no need to refer to the harrowing scenes he had witnessed, for his hearers, numbering many of the bereaved, had witnessed them for themselves. Here he stressed the consolations of the Christian religion rather than its challenge. He counselled the bereaved to take their troubles to Jesus, who, having taken upon himself our form and suffered in like manner as we suffer, is able and willing to bear our afflictions if we will only cast them upon Him.



Bulli Mine Disaster as depicted in the *Illustrated Sydney News*.

From a theological point of view the most interesting of the sermons was preached by the Congregationalist minister, the Rev. E.T. Miles. He declared that he was not one of those who believed that events such as the Bulli disaster were judgments from God. In some instances God directly brings things to pass, but in others he merely permits such to take place, as he allowed Job to be afflicted. The Bulli calamity was one of those events which were only permitted by God. Why such were ever permitted, we know not now; we should know hereafter.

Then Miles touched on an insight which is, perhaps, the closest the theodist - that is the one who attempts to explain God's purpose in allowing catastrophe - can come to giving a reason for disaster, namely that compassion increases in proportion to meaninglessness. Miles put it more simply: 'But as God never chastens with both hands, so the distressing circumstances of the disaster have given rise to intense sympathy in the hearts of the people, as well as causing deep sorrow. That genuine sympathy will result in much practical assistance being rendered to the widows and orphans of the men whose lives have been cut off in such an awe-striking manner'.

Dying suddenly and unprepared has always been considered regrettable by the Church. In 'the Litany' of the Church of England is a prayer to be delivered 'from sudden death'. For Catholics, the thought of sudden death is even more troublesome since it involves being denied the last rites. Hence Father Sheehy in his sermon at St. Francis Xavier's expressed the vain hope that God had granted to the victims 'that ere they were called away they were allowed time to make a heartfelt act of contrition'. It is, therefore, interesting that rather than stress the awfulness of sudden and unprepared death, the Rev. Miles stressed the mercy of it: '... it is by the wisdom and kindness of God that men such as lost their lives in the Bulli Colliery did not know what was to happen to them, or the time, place, or circumstances of their deaths. All have to die some time and one of the greatest blessings of God is that no one knows when that end shall come'. Miles cited Shakespeare who observed that the rule of life is that men think all others mortal but themselves and thus the masses pass through life unto death. Far better, Miles insisted, to acknowledge the fact of one's mortality. His concluding words are those of the practised apologist: 'Even admitting - which I do not - that belief in God and the hereafter are all a delusion, a

Christian life and a Christian death, with their happiness and hope are infinitely worth having as compared with the life and death of the ungodly⁶.



Members of Wollongong Congregational Church at the turn of the century - Rev. E.T. Miles seated extreme left with invalid son at his feet.

The sermon which received the greatest attention in the press was that of the Catholic priest, Dr. Sheehy. His forthright insistence that the ways of God are not to be questioned, followed by an equally forthright condemnation of the divisions created by industrial unrest, indicate that he was a man of authority who expected to be obeyed. It was not only that all Catholic priests expected to be obeyed in those days, but Austin Sheehy, a Benedictine, was used to exercising authority. Folding had made him his Vicar-General and in the late 1860s pressed unsuccessfully to have him appointed his assistant bishop. On Vaughan's appointment in 1873, Sheehy's authority waned. He asked to be made parish priest first of Windsor and then of Wollongong where his parents had settled on their arrival from Ireland.

Sheehy began his sermon on the disaster with the thought that 'Death is not so appalling, it is the judgment after death which strikes terror to the heart.' He continued, 'It is not for us to enquire into the divine wisdom of God. It is not for us to question why this calamity has been sent, or why some were not spared to tell the

cause of the dreadful accident. God in his infinite wisdom sends all for the best. It is for us to profit by this visitation, to amend our lives, for we must all die.' He concluded by referring to the question of the blacklegs which had impressed him so deeply:

God forbid that such a feeling of distinction should get abroad. I appeal to you in the name of all that is sacred to crush that feeling from your breasts. We are all God's creatures whether 'blackleg' or 'whiteleg'; ... each and all are equal in the sight of God. Never, never let me hear the distinction made, but let us pray for all the widows and children in their desolation; no matter what religion; no matter what distinctions are unhappily or improperly made; let us try to comfort them in their loneliness, and cheer them in their misfortunes.

The Disaster Monument



Disaster monument and St. Augustine's Anglican Church, Bulli.

The bitterness continued, however, and William Wynn tells us in his diary that when a blackleg rose to sing at a YMCA concert in Bulli on 18 February 1888 'the greater part of the ordinance (sic) left the hall'. Emotions threatened to get out of control at the opening of a monument to mark the first anniversary of the disaster in 1888. The Government wanted the monument erected in Bulli Park, but succumbed to the miners' pressure and sited it just outside the St. Augustine's churchyard where most of the victims lay. The

Governor, Lord Carrington, was expected to unveil the monument on Friday, 23 March, but at the last moment Sir Henry Parkes, nervous of violence, telegraphed a postponement. The disappointed miners held a procession anyway, followed by a demonstration when speakers called for the reformation of the Miners District Union. The acting rector of Bulli was called on to offer prayer and took advantage of the opportunity to chide the miners for introducing 'the matter of masters and men' on such a solemn occasion.

The following Sunday large numbers attended combined church services in the morning and afternoon at Bulli Park. All the denominations were represented on the platform by their clergy except the Catholics. Dean Ewing of Wollongong encouraged the miners to live by the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who bore the opposition of sinners. So they should put an end to industrial warfare and live in peace and unity with one another.

4. THE SALVATION ARMY

Within ten weeks of the disaster the Salvation Army 'opened fire on the enemy in Bulli' by forming a corps there (*JM* 11/6/87). Itself a strong temperance organisation, the Army penetrated enemy territory by renting both its officers' quarters and barracks from local publicans.

A 'skirmishing squad' of the Salvation Army had first descended on Wollongong on 26 December 1884 when they had held a 'somewhat lively' meeting in the Temperance Hall. Such notorious converted sinners as 'Scotch Express', 'Happy Harry', the 'Inmanuelite', and 'Converted Cheap Jack' invited their hearers to give their hearts to Jesus and join 'the Harmy'. (*JM*, 27 December 1884). The Wollongong Corps was not permanently established at Wollongong, however, until 29 June 1886 when a contingent including a 'converted Chinaman, a Dane, and three or four others' conducted a recruiting campaign. Adjutant Charles H. Jeffries described the campaign in the *War Cry*: 'Salvation troops landed from the steamer on Saturday morning, and under cover of darkness, at night marched out to attack the dominions of the devil ... Crowds of the enemy surrounded us, hooting, howling, and firing soft shot that did no damage. Hall packed. Great disorder ... sure of victory'.

The 'Salvation Army' was the name adopted in 1878 for a mission to the poor headed by William Booth, an ex-Anglican and ex-Methodist. Booth and his equally charismatic wife, Catherine, were convinced that even the nonconformist churches were far too conventional in their approach to the 'submerged tenth' or 'the dangerous classes' to whom the Gospel must be taken since they would not attend church. Evangelistic and revivalistic, the Army employed street meetings, processions, and, to drown the roar of hostile mobs, bands. Brewers and publicans, alarmed by the success of the Army, but well-versed in organising intimidation, established the Skeleton Army to defend the citadels of Satan, and anti-Army riots were common in England in the 1880s. Wherever it went the Army, an unknown quantity, provoked persecution at first, recalling the persecution of Methodists 150 years earlier. In India, Hindus dreaded the advent of this new militant form of Christianity, fearing forcible conversion. Their British overlords knew no better, however, and, when they heard that the Army was coming, they thought it must be a new and superior detachment of the British Army and hence went on parade in formal welcome.

The first Australian corps was formed in Adelaide in 1881, followed by Melbourne and Sydney in 1882. Salvationists were frequently prosecuted and sometimes gaoled for causing obstruction, but the most celebrated battle between the Sallies and the civic authorities took place in Wollongong itself in 1888. There, a single cornet player and a drummer made up the entire band, but it was irritating in proportion to its smallness. After what it considered mature deliberation the Municipal Council adopted a by-law. 'No musical procession shall parade in any of the streets of the borough except with the written permission of the Mayor'. Salvationists refused to seek permission and refused, when convicted, to pay the fine, and hence were gaoled in embarrassing numbers. Even Jeffries, by now Major of the Sydney Corps, was gaoled - and on his honeymoon, too.

The Sallies, however, reinforced their army of martyrs with ease since the Illawarra railway was opened only weeks earlier. Neither were they without tactical skill: an individual cornet player or an individual drummer would parade, arguing that one man does not constitute a procession. The Police Magistrate ruled against this argument. Parliament became involved, its member rudely denning

the Magistrate's ruling. The population of Wollongong was divided over the issue. So too, were the churches. Pugacious Gilby, the Primitive Methodist minister, supported the Sallies and called for the sacking of the Magistrate. The Wesleyan and Presbyterian ministers, on the other hand, supported the reign of repression of the civic fathers. Perhaps they thought Salvationism was an affront to respectability, and coarsened religion. Eventually the Full Court declared the by-law *ultra vires*. Salvation Army processions had come to stay and, henceforth, New Year's revellers at Wollongong hotels found that even their loudest bacchanalian anthems were drowned by the Sallies' bands. (*Illawarra Historical Society Bulletin*, March, April, May, 1976).



Wollongong Salvation Army Band, 1910.

5. NSW CENTENARY

In January 1888 Australians celebrated the centenary of their nation in the pew and on the sporting field. In Sydney the denominations came together at the United National Thanksgiving held in the Exhibition Building on 29 January 1888. The Catholics were not invited, perhaps because they had always refused such invitations

in the past, Cardinal Moran, who had succeeded Vaughan as Archbishop of Sydney sought to upstage the Protestants, however, with a magnificent demonstration of Catholic power, beginning on 22 January with a provincial synod of bishops. In spite of their differences, however, Catholics and Protestants were united in their concern to emphasise, especially to statesmen, that the Christian religion was essential to the welfare of the nation.

In Wollongong centenary celebrations were launched on 22 January with a united service in the town hall, arranged by the Wollongong Clergymen's Union, a forerunner of the Minister's Fraternal of our day. Neither the Anglicans nor the Catholics were represented: the former held their own centenary service while no centenary celebrations were reported at St. Francis Xavier's. Attendance at the town hall was estimated at between 700 and 800, and clergy participated from the Presbyterian, Congregational, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches. The sermon was delivered by the Rev. H. Youngman (Wesleyan) on the text Psalm 127.1, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'. Youngman's emphasis was two-fold: the importance of Christian unity and the necessity of combining patriotism with religion. 'It is a great thing', he began, 'to be made to feel our unity, as is evidenced by this vast congregation of Christian people, whose interests blend underneath the minor differences of nationality, church government, and political parties'. 'Religion without patriotism', he concluded, 'is narrow, stunted, and dwarfed. But patriotism finds its loftiest and purest inspiration and its most efficient aid in religion. There is nothing so capable of producing men of high character as religion ... it makes men public spirited. It is the duty, as it is the desire of the true Christian to seek the good of the country in which he dwells. He is to dwell in it as a divinely appointed home and sphere of work. And as he prayed, he is bound to labour so that the kingdom of this earth shall become the kingdom of God and of His Christ'. (*IM*, 24 January 1888).

The end of Australia's first century of settlement coincided with the peak of an economic boom. Visiting observers were optimistic about the future of Christianity, estimating that religious activity was healthier than in the 'Home Country' and on a par with the United States. The number of churches, members, clergy, and Sunday school pupils had all doubled in the space of two decades

(J.D. Bollen, *Religion in Australian Society*, 1973, p.40). Trollope's words written in 1871 seemed even truer in 1888: 'Religious teaching and the exercise of religious worship are held as being essential to civilization and general well-being by the people of Australia' (*Australia*, p.239).



Wollongong in the early 1880s.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECESSION, REVIVAL AND DISASTER

1890 – 1902

TABLE OF EVENTS

1890 – 1902

1890

Maritime strike.

Recession began.

William Saumarez Smith appointed Anglican Bishop of Sydney.

11 April - Mt. Brandon C of E church opened (near Jamberoo).

Woonona Presbyterian Parish created with Robbinsville (Thirroul) and Corrimal attached.

Keiraville Congregational Church built by voluntary labour during the 1890 strike on land donated by John Shipp.

1891

Helensburgh C of E Provisional District commenced, (Holy Cross Catholic Church and Methodist Church Helensburgh opened soon afterwards).

6 September - Renovations of St. Francis Xavier's opened by Cardinal Moran.

1892

Church of Holy Redeemer (C of E), Helensburgh, opened (licensed 28 May).

Wesleyan Methodist Church opened at Mt. Kembla.

23 May - New Primitive Methodist Church opened, Wollongong.

1893

Building of Bellambi C of E (?).

1894

St. Clement's Church, Mt. Kembla, opened (RC).

1896

27 March - *St. Alban's Corrimal dedicated (C of E).*

Rebuilding of Sherbrooke Union Church.

1897

Dapto Smelting Works opened.

1898

Port Kembla Harbour Act passed.

Macquarie Pass opened.

1899

Coke ovens built at Port Kembla, Wollongong, and Belfambi between 1899 and 1901.

12 March - *First Anglican Church Service held at Port Kembla in old school near No. 3 Jetty.*

1900

First Australasian Catholic Congress.

18 April - *Present All Saints Church (C of E) Nowra, opened.*

9 May - *New Convent opened at Dapto.*

26 August - *New St. Joseph's Church, Bulli, opened (RC).*

2 December - *New Church of St. John the Evangelist, Dapto, opened (RC).*

1901

Federation of Australia.

Union of Presbyterian Churches at the national level.

New Presbyterian work at Thirroul and Port Kembla. Presbyterian Home Mission Station formed at Helensburgh.

1902

January - Union of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists in Australia.

Vickery's tent missions - revival in Illawarra.

31 July - Mt. Kembla mine disaster.

17 May - RC Sunday School Corrimal first used.

28 September - New brick St. Columbkille's RC Church, Corrimal, opened.

Presbyterian Church built at Unanderra.

Prophecies of material abundance made in the 1880s were never realised. The boom in the mining industry collapsed, and the 1890s was a decade of recession, reflecting a world depression and an eight year drought, the longest in recorded Australian history. The collieries were seriously over-capitalised, with a capacity for output well in excess of demand. Miners were employed only intermittently and the hewing rate paid them for each ton of coal extracted from the mine was repeatedly cut to lower costs. From 1895 a smelting works brought people and a measure of prosperity to Dapto, hitherto the sleepiest settlement in the Illawarra, but the Works collapsed in 1905. In 1902 the Mt. Kembla Mine exploded, tragically eclipsing the Bulli disaster in loss of life.

Religion, however, frequently thrives in the face of adversity. The 1890s saw unprecedented co-operation between the Protestant churches culminating in genuine ecumenical gains early in the new century; and 1902, the year of Queen Victoria's death, of Australia's worst mining disaster and the nadir of its worst drought and second-worst depression, was also the year of one of its greatest religious revivals. The revival was a Protestant affair, but not all revivals in the period were confined to Protestants. The Redemptorists, introduced to Australia in 1882 by Bishop James Murray of Maitland, were experts in 'Catholic revivalism'. They were invited into parishes to take missions which consisted of 'long and impassioned sermons, strong in emphasis on hell-fire, church authority and strict moral laws' (P. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, p.212). A mission held in the Kiama parish in February 1897, for example, by the Redemptorist, Father Hunt, was reported to be 'a great success' (Kiama File, St. Mary's Archives).

1. RELIGION FOR THE RICH AND POOR

Glimpses of piety in Illawarra in the 1890s reveal that religion consoled the distressed while it warmed and reinforced the security of the comfortable, for even in that decade Illawarra was not such a bad place for gentry and tourists.

One such tourist was G.O. Martin-Smith who, with companions, went on a walking tour of Illawarra early in 1893. They spent one evening with the Blackmans, a Methodist family of West Dapto, at the foothills of Mt. Kembla, rejoicing in the 'peculiar graces' of

Blackman's five daughters which Martin-Smith attributed 'largely' to 'the freshness and purity of the mountain air'. 'Tea being over,' continued the diarist, 'we all joined in singing from Sankey's Hymn Book, and sang until we tired. The evening passed so rapidly that I was surprised when it was time for us to say "goodnight" ... we went to sleep congratulating ourselves, and much elated on the happiness we had enjoyed'. We are not told who was chiefly responsible for the happiness - Blackman's daughters or Ira Sankey, the American revivalist and hymn-writer - but we trust that Martin-Smith, 'ere he slept, gave thanks to the Creator of both.



The Blackmans: afternoon tea at Farnborough, April, 1891.

The greatest concentration of gentry congregated at St. Michael's Church of England in Wollongong: the Osbornes, MacCubes, Jenkins and Turners. They would arrive in state in their broughams, and leave their liveried grooms outside the church. While little Jean Osborne inside was mesmerised by the capacity of the rector to read the Bible with his eyes shut, the grooms outside engaged in far loftier theological disputation. The world, they opined, was not round but square, for does not the Bible speak of 'the four corners of the earth'?

The recession did touch little Miss Osborne in that her devout,

church-going grandmother, Mrs. Turner, visited the poor in her capacity as President of the Benevolent Society. Jean was sent to 'wretched, smelly cottages' to deliver orders for the monthly grocery dole. Her grandmother also visited women in confinement with her 'Dorcas bag', named after the charitable garment-maker in the Book of Acts, Chapter 9. The bag contained baby's clothing and bedding and was returnable after use.

The reality of religious faith at work in a mining community is illustrated by young Albert Dungey of Mt. Kembla. The composition book he wrote at school in 1894 has survived. Many of his compositions begin with the words, 'The pit is working very badly', an indication that anxiety occasioned by the intermittent working of the mine was communicated from father to son. In February 1895 Albert would turn 14, and on that day would begin work at the mine. In November 1894, however, he became ill. Sunstroke was diagnosed. His grandmother wrote from Armidale to comfort his mother:

Dear Mary, do not rebel against God's will, But pray and trust in him that sends trouble and affliction for he sends it to us to bring us nearer to him. Blessed be his holy name.

Such faith was shared by Albert. His last words were, 'Don't fret, mother, I am going to live with the Lord'. He died of a burst appendix on 20 December 1894.

Further south, at Albion Park, the pioneer of Illawarra Methodism, local preacher and revivalist, John Vidler, reappears on the scene. He was appointed missionary to aborigines still living around Lake Illawarra, but he died in 1892 shortly after his appointment.

2. CHURCH UNITY

Christians manifested their essential unity during this period in three distinct ways. first, in some remote areas of small population Union churches were built; second, in more populated areas the churches combined for interdenominational activities such as Sunday school picnics and missions; third, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists achieved union. Each type may be illustrated from the Illawarra experience.

Sherbrooke Union Church

West of the escarpment above Bulli was the village of Sherbrooke named after Viscount Sherbrooke (Robert Lowe), a prominent NSW barrister. In May 1882 Sherbrooke Union Church was opened in a ceremony at which Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist clergymen treated the 200 who attended to sermons on Christian unity. Hymns were sung from Sankey's hymn-book, published as recently as 1873, an interesting pointer to the receptivity of Australian Christians to some expressions of American religion. In 1896 the church was damaged by a bushfire, and a new one built. 'The people remained all through the history of the settlement a united community', observes W.A. Bayley, 'and their spiritual and social life centred around the Union Church' (*Black Diamonds*, pp.35,48). In such areas of sparse population church duplication made little sense, and Union churches and Sunday schools became a feature of Illawarra Christianity.

Sherbrooke was resumed by the government in 1903 when it was included in the catchment area for the Cataract Dam. Between 1904 and 1907 workers on the dam lived with their families in 'Cataract City', replete with Anglican and Catholic churches. The



Sherbrooke apples transported to train at Bulli, c.1900.

churches, to their credit, were adept at seizing any opportunity to reach the labouring classes.

Mt. Kembla's Sunday School Picnic

The second type of Christian unity - interdenominational activity - is well illustrated at Mt. Kembla in the late 1890s. Here the opening of the mine in 1883 brought all the denominations to supplement the Church of England, opened as early as 1858. The Primitive Methodist Church was opened in 1884, the Presbyterian Church in 1888, the Wesleyan in 1892, and in 1894 the Roman Catholic Church was dedicated to St. Clement the patron saint of miners. Any sectarian rivalry, however, was scotched by the influence of Ebenezer Vickery, managing director of the mine and Methodist philanthropist, Mrs. G.H. Ronaldson, wife of the mine manager, church organist and Sunday school teacher, and William M'Murray, Presbyterian Sunday School superintendent and mine deputy destined for martyrdom in the rescue operation following the 1902 disaster. This devout trinity master-minded the interdenominational Sunday school picnic which in the 1890s was the greatest day in the Mt. Kembla social calendar:

Refreshments were served in the tennis court, the joyous scene presented by the assembly of the youth, beauty, and manhood of Kembla Heights within the charming enclosure being a picture worthy of the brush of an artist of the highest genius. (*JM*, 29 January 1898)

The picnics were attended by all the denominations including the Roman Catholics, a fact considered astonishing by contemporaries, who hailed the picnics as an object lesson in brotherhood to parsons and priests locked elsewhere in sectarian combat (*JM*, 14 January 1897). The picnics were also praised as a fine exemplar of the federal spirit at a time when Australia was moving towards federation.

Methodist Union

The third expression of Christian unity is denominational re-unification. In 1902 the Wesleyan Methodists united with denominational splinter groups, particularly the Primitive Methodists, to form the Methodist Church of Australasia. There were three major reasons

for this development. First, there was no ideological conflict to resolve, in that doctrines inherited from John Wesley were similar. Second, the colonial experience diminished the differences in government which existed between the branches of Methodism. Third, Methodists were inveterate pragmatists and came to believe that mission, their primary commitment, was better served by unity than division. Wollongong Wesleyans were slow to endorse the movement towards reunification, probably because their most influential clergy in the 1890s, John Austin and J. Dowson, were outspoken opponents of union, believing it would divert members from scriptural holiness. Illawarra Primitives urged their tepid Wesleyan brothers to look at union from a 'wider' spiritual standpoint'!

Believing as we do that this movement is of God and that it will stand for the advancement of Christ's kingdom upon the earth ... we believe that all personal and financial matters will soon right themselves,



Methodist Sunday School teachers, Bulli, 1898.

These conflicting attitudes reflected the wider Australian experience where the smaller Methodist denominations were more eager for union than the Wesleyans (Broom, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, p.77), but in Illawarra it was the Primitives who lost most in the 1902 Union. In Wollongong the two denominations resolved

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION

New South Wales District
Australia
Whillamum Circuit

TO
MR JOHN WATERS,
Local Preacher, & Circuit Steward

Dear Brother,

We take this opportunity on the occasion of your undertaking a journey to your native and much beloved WILSON to give expression to our deep and lasting love and respect for you and your family, and as some slight acknowledgment of your devoted labours in the temples of David's House, and the valuation of the people for a period of over 50 years. Since your arrival in the District, your Ministry and your labours have been blessed and valuable service to advance the interests of our beloved Connexion on the capacity of Wilson's Presbytery and for many years (Wilson's Presbytery).

You have also on many occasions graciously and generously filled the position of "President Deacons" in our Churches, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion.

In all these and in many other ways your labours and efforts have been most valued to the Church of your District. Your Faithful Ministry and your love, devotion and very highly appreciated by our Church, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion.

It has been our privilege to have you as one of our Ministers during the past year, and we are sure that you are able to contribute a measure to the cause of our beloved Connexion, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion.

And we are sure that you are able to contribute a measure to the cause of our beloved Connexion, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion, and we are sure that your services in these positions have been devoted and unreservedly to the cause of our beloved Connexion.

Our prayers and good wishes will follow you and your daughter on your travels, and may their loving Father's hand protect you both and bring you safely back again.

I am, my Dear Brother,

On behalf of the Officers and Members of the Church,

Respectfully Yours,

Thomas Davies Minister

to amalgamate and use Wesley Church as their home. A committee, including five ex-Wesleyans, sold off the Primitives' property in Campbell Street. Rev. Willard (ex-Wesleyan) continued his ministry whereas the ex-Primitive minister was moved on. Lay involvement in preaching and class leadership, a Primitive emphasis, declined: in 1900 Wollongong Primitive laity took 77% of all church services, whereas in the new United Methodist church in 1902/3 laity took only 47%. Clerical control of Quarterly meetings increased, and Primitive minute books were closed. It was a victory not so much for the clergy as for the Wollongong Wesleyan laity for whom the united Methodist Church was a continuation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and a discontinuation of the Primitive Methodist Church. 'The Prims always felt outsiders after Union' remarked one ex-Primitive (On Methodist union, see P. Tibbs, *Illawarra Methodism in the Nineteenth Century*, ch.5). Divine favour, however, appeared to be poured out on the Union because it was accompanied immediately by religious revival on a scale hitherto unprecedented in Australian history.

3. EBENEZER VICKERY AND RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

The background to the revival may be traced back to 1899 with the formation of the Evangelical Council of NSW which numbered among its members the Honourable Ebenezer Vickery, M.L.C., managing director of the Mt. Kembla Coal and Oil Company. Evangelicalism has always had a consistent missionary and ecumenical tendency, and the Council sponsored an interdenominational Simultaneous Mission in Sydney in November 1901. It was known as the Simultaneous Mission because it was held simultaneously in over 50 centres in Sydney for a two-week period. Some of the meetings were held in tents to



Ebenezer Vickery.

break down class and denominational barriers, to attract those put off by steeples and stained glass, and to appeal to the pioneering spirit which, it was believed, still beat in the average Aussie's breast. Vickery attended the mission in the Sydney suburb of Waverley and found himself thinking that if tent missions worked so well in Waverley, then they would have to be even more successful elsewhere. This was a reasonable line of thought, for Waverley was then a mighty posh suburb. Vickery himself had been the principal donor towards the Waverley Methodist Church which could seat a thousand people and was described as 'the most beautiful belonging to the denomination in the southern World' (J. Colwell, *Illustrated History of Methodism*, p.460).

Vickery, however, was one Australian Christian as interested in paying for ministry as for buildings and he resolved to send a tent mission to every town in NSW with a population over 400. Each tent came equipped with organ, acetylene lighting, appropriate literature, an enquiry room and a staff of three, including an evangelist. Vickery spent in excess of 10,000 pounds equipping 12 large tents. The mission to rural NSW was planned to start with the South Coast, beginning at Nowra and working north to Helensburgh, covering the entire Illawarra in ten weeks.

In Nowra and Berry the mission went well, winning over 300 converts. In Kiama the response (70 converts) was considered disappointing, while at Albion Park and Dapto the results were more modest still (47 and 24 respectively). In Illawarra mining communities, however, the fire of the Spirit was all-consuming, converting and changing the lives of a significant percentage of the population before the mission ended on 9 April 1902, three weeks behind schedule. In the entire South Coast Mission, 2,735 conversions were recorded, about 15% of the Illawarra population. For the entire State mission which lasted for 22 months over 25,000 were rescued from 'the surging surf of sinfulness'.

Revival in the mining communities

Of the Mt. Kembla mission, one eye-witness reported

The tent was quite full, although many present seemed to stand at bay as it were, an intense emotion with an evident assent to the Preacher's burning words were imprinted on every face and feature.

Another witness reported on the moral impact of the mission:

At Kembla Heights, a village greatly deteriorated by the influence of a private gambling club situated outside the boundaries of Mount Kembla Company's property, an evil influence had long been at work... Because of the influence of this club, Mount Kembla was looked upon as unpromising soil for the Mission. Many distressed women said to the visitors: 'I hope you will be able to shut up the drinking and gambling club.' Earnest prayer was offered for the Divine blessing to fall on Mount Kembla. Although at first the outlook was not promising there was soon a movement among the 'dry bones'. The workers began to reap, and the local club lost some of its members (Cohell, *op.cit.*, p.628).

In fact, 131 professed conversion at Mt. Kembla, the largest proportion of conversions in any community in the South Coast Mission. Churches were suddenly filled, and the young were organised into a Christian Endeavour Society, a branch of an organisation founded in Portland, USA, in 1881 with the motto 'For Christ and the Church'. *The Methodist* (9 August 1902) emphasised that conversion was evidenced by a dramatic change of conduct:

In a mining community profession of religion is not glibly made, and the reality of change experienced by these converts was evidenced in altered tone of life and conversation in the mine and the township. Profanity and licence gave place to purity of speech and sobriety of demeanour, and ribald songs to hymns of gladness and praise.

If that sounds too good to be true the local press, albeit in better humour, reported a similar change at Mt. Keira where there were 214 converts:

The mission at Mt. Keira is responsible for a vast amount of good. An old employee connected with the Mt. Keira mine for the last 40 years avers that less swearing has taken place during the last few days than has ever been the case before. The horses employed therein fail to understand their commands, they being unaccompanied with the usual emphasis (*Newcastle Mercury*, 26 February 1902).

At Balgownie, the missionaries found little to complain of morally, but spiritually it was reported to be 'poverty stricken ... with little family religion'. The mission here won 183 converts and had considerable impact on families: 'parents came out seeking the offered Christ, followed by their children'. Families divided by mutual hostilities were reunited. The local dancing saloon, the only morally

dubious institution in the town, lost its hold on the young people. (*The Methodist*, 5 April 1902).

As the Spirit's fire swept northwards the experience of all the mining communities was described as 'gloriously monotonous'. Bull: 292 conversions, most of whom, in the last days of the mission, were men - the missionaries were adept at 'candid and condemnatory remarks on masculine vices'. Corrimall and Bellambi: 'This is a hard place, but God is working powerfully. Five Roman Catholics have been converted at one service.' Finally, as if now confident of facing the supreme test, the fire reached Helensburgh. The Metropolitan Colliery, Helensburgh, had opened in 1888 and Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Methodist churches were built there in the early 1890s. With that blindness sometimes produced by holy zeal, however, the mission team saw Helensburgh as a 'hell upon earth, a town without churches, and only casual visits from the clergy' (*The Methodist* 9 August 1902). In the face of such deprivation grace abounded all the more. The mission began on Easter Day 1902 and was scheduled to last seven days, but so great was the response that the meetings



Helensburgh Workmen's Club.

continued, harvesting 234 souls. The NSW Methodist Conference voted additional finance so that Helensburgh could have its own resident minister. In 1903 Helensburgh became a new Methodist circuit with one church, four other preaching places, 55 full members, 340 attendants/adherents, and three Sunday schools with 13 teachers and 128 scholars.

Assessment and explanations of the Revival

The Rev. C.A. White, organising secretary of the South Coast Mission Committee, summed up the results of the mission as follows:

Altogether the magnitude of the movement and its blessed results far surpass the most sanguine hopes entertained at the outset. The movement grew as it proceeded and attracted in its scope all sorts and conditions of men and women from the highest to the lowest ranks of society under the one banner of the Lord Jesus Christ. It appeared at first as if it were a cloud on the horizon, not larger than a man's hand, and speedily spread over the whole of the Illawarra firmament, until copious showers of the Holy Spirit descended upon thousands of thirsty souls throughout the community so richly favoured from on high (Colwell, *op.cit.*, p.630).

White's words are a close paraphrase of the last verse of Charles Wesley's hymn 'See how great a flame aspires', Hymn 263 in *The Methodist Hymn Book*, the first verse of which is quoted on the cover of this book. His use of Wesley's words show how deeply the ethos of revivalism had entered his psyche, and hints at the power of the tradition of revivalism in Evangelical Christianity.

Asked what were the evidences 'to the man in the street' that the revival was genuine, the Rev. D. O'Donnell, one of the two missionaries, replied that the question was a very proper one, since there should be 'works meet for repentance', and he catalogued the following:

First, payment of debts. Tradesmen report the settlement of accounts they had long since regarded as bad. Second, a pure language ... It is said that in the Mount Keira pit an oath has scarcely been heard since the Mission...Third, A far day's work. The proprietor of one of the mines told me that the biggest day's output of coal they ever had, followed the Mission. Fourth, attendance at Church. All the churches report greatly increased congregations and increase in the membership. (*Ibid.*)

Factors in Revival

Perhaps not even the great Billy Graham Crusade of 1959 has had a greater impact on the history of the Protestant churches in NSW than the Tent Missions of 1902/3. Accordingly, it is worth pausing to speculate on what, under God, were the human causes of such spiritual blessing, whilst recognising that the power of God's Word and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit make all such explanations ultimately unnecessary. First, economic hardship and drought undermined optimism based on material prosperity. Forty million sheep perished in the drought of 1895-1903, and on 26 February 1902, right in the middle of the South Coast Mission, the government gazetted a public holiday to pray for an end to the drought. The recession had been reflected in poor church offertories and the Anglican rector of Wollongong in 1897, for example, had his stipend cut. The parlous state of church finances was a cause of chronic anxiety to clergy and committed laity alike. A second factor appears to have been a community-wide recognition that moral standards had degenerated and that deeper religious commitment was the surest antidote. Third, the mission was the fruit of the closest co-operation the Protestant churches had ever enjoyed. Admittedly, the Anglican rectors of Wollongong and Bulli thought they should follow the advice of their scholarly and cautious Archbishop, William Saumarez Smith, that such a non-denominational movement ought not be endorsed officially, but the rectors of Nowra, Berry, Jamberoo, Kiama and Dapto worked 'heart and soul' for the mission, and it was reported, for example, that most of the 70 Kiama converts were Anglicans. Charles White, organising secretary and minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wollongong, had the joy of seeing more than 50 members added to the Communion Roll of his own church.

Other factors contributing to the success of the mission may have been: the suitability and novelty of the method, tent missions; the skills and gifts of the missionaries, the Rev. David O'Donnell and Mr. Robert Robertson; the entertainment value of the mission, replete with excellent speakers and good music; detailed and efficient organisation; a heightened sense of expectation and prayerfulness before the mission even began; and good publicity maintained through the course of the mission by the local and religious press.



A test mission service: Robert Robertson and S.E. Vickery in charge.

The founder of the Central Methodist Mission, William George Taylor, a veteran of many revivals and a close friend of Vickery, observed, 'I have never known a revival of religion like unto this'. The revivalism inherent in Evangelicalism in general and in Methodism in particular has been a recurring phenomenon in Australian Christianity, but its finest flowering, the culmination of much prayerful hope and expectation, was in Illawarra in 1902.

4. THE MT. KEMBLA MINE DISASTER

Ebenezer Vickery was in the Legislative Council on 31 July 1902 when he received a telegram that a terrible explosion had taken many lives in the Mt. Kembla Colliery. The blood drained from his face with shock, and he had to be helped to his head office in Pitt Street. To a little private room above his office he summoned W.G. Taylor. 'The whole man was bowed and stricken with grief,' Taylor recalled. 'In the midst of sobs that almost overpowered him he said, "Oh to think of this! Our one first and chief concern has always been the safety and the comfort of our men; and now to think of this." As we knelt side by side in that little room, it seemed to me as if I were permitted to see into the very soul of a good and of a great man' (W.G. Taylor, *The Life Story of an Australian Evangelist*, p.268).

History will not be able to treat Vickery so uncritically. He was a great philanthropist, perhaps the greatest of his day in Australia, and a good Christian with a zeal for souls. Most today would perceive, however, that there was an inconsistency between his private profession and his business practice in that he opposed fiercely all legislation aimed at improving mine safety. In spite of pit disasters at Ferndale and Bulli, state intervention in mine safety was beyond Vickery's comprehension. When debating the Coal Mines Regulation Bill in 1894, he exclaimed, 'Do you think owners want their mines to explode?'

In 1906 Vickery was in California during the great earthquake. Persons sleeping in the room next to him were killed, while he survived untouched, only to die peacefully some months later in Leeds, the capital of English Methodism. After a full and strenuous life of four score years, he was ready for his summons, and we may be confident that he stood before his Maker on neither his record as philanthropist nor as managing director, but on Christ, the solid rock.

The death toll

The Mt. Kembla explosion made the ground, on which Mt. Kembla stands, lurch as if hit by an earthquake. The school building in which the children were receiving religious instruction was cracked, and the children stampeded. In her miner's cottage Mrs. Dungey sank to her knees and prayed. She would be in need of divine grace: her husband's body lay decapitated in the mine. A great cloud of smoke hung over Mt. Kembla, blotting out the sun. Fowls, thinking it was nightfall, went to roost. In Wollongong the Rev. C.A. White alerted the town to certain tragedy, and was later said to be the first to do so. The Methodist minister of Dapto, R.J. Thomas, a miner before entering the ministry, hastened to the scene of the disaster, organised a rescue party, and penetrated the mine, where he was overcome by afterdamp and had to be rescued himself. Newspaper reports on him were headed 'The Plucky Parson', and he received a silver medal from the Royal Humane Society.

Ninety-six men and boys perished in the disaster, the worst peacetime disaster in Australia's history. Among the victims were Major Henry Osborne MacCabe and William M' Murray who died

in the rescue operation and were found locked in each other's arms. Both were outstanding lay leaders in their respective churches. For *The Methodist* (9 August 1902) it was cause for praise that among the victims were several recently converted in the revival:

Sudden death to sudden glory. How marvellous and complete the transition. From the grimy mine, the poisonous gases and the shattering explosion to the city and temple of light, to the company of the ransomed and glory of God. Such is the Christian's living hope.



Artist's impression of the discovery of the bodies of McCabe and M'Murray, Mt. Kembla Mine Disaster.

The disaster funerals

That Methodism, embraced by the Company's managing director and strengthened by the revival, was the established religion of Mt. Kembla is well illustrated by the funerals. Thirty of the victims were buried by Methodist ministers, whereas at Bulli after the 1887 disaster only two received Methodist funerals. Twenty-four were buried according to Catholic rites, twenty-three received Anglican funerals, fourteen Presbyterian, and five are unknown. Most of the

Methodists and Presbyterians were buried in a new cemetery surveyed for this purpose in record time by Dr. Robertson, mining engineer, on company property in Windy Gully above Mt. Kembla township. There also the company buried bodies unclaimed by relatives, giving them Methodist funerals. Again, this contrasts with Bulli where the unidentified were given Anglican funerals. There is evidence that among those buried with Methodist rites at Windy Gully, were some who were not Methodists: John Aitken was a Presbyterian elder; his son, Henry, was baptised Roman Catholic.

The first funeral was that of Edward Robson, taken at Windy Gully cemetery by the plucky parson on the day after the explosion. The next day 29 bodies were buried. D'Arcy-Irvine, rector of Wollongong, buried eight of the Anglican victims in the Mt. Kembla churchyard. Funeral services were held throughout the day in St. Clement's Catholic Church, Mt. Kembla, but the bodies had to be transported to Wollongong where they arrived at dusk. Fathers Byrne and Dunne called for buggy lamps and the bodies were interred after nightfall. The next day, Sunday 3 August, D'Arcy-Irvine officiated at the military funeral of Major MacCabe, and afterwards noted in the St. Michael's register of deaths, "a noble deed and a noble death" as I said at the funeral'. Meanwhile, J.R. Hunter,



Mt. Kembla Mine Disaster, 1902.

Religious Instructor of Wollongong's public schools and a licensed lay reader, continued with the funerals of Anglican victims at Mt. Kembla. In all, 39 bodies were buried on that Sunday.

In addition, memorial services were held in all the churches. The selection of sacred music at Wesley Church was described as 'sensitive' even though it included the anthem, 'Vital Spark'. At St. Francis Xavier's, Father Byrne said Masses for the repose of the souls of victims, and announced that the bodies of all Catholic victims had been recovered, except that of Micky Brennan. Deprived of the emotional release of a funeral, Brennan's father travelled to the mine every weekend for two years to enquire if the body had been found, until the poor man was drowned in Wollongong Harbour. Brennan's descendants consoled themselves with the thought that 'Micky has the largest tomb in Australia', and Mt. Kembla miners subsequently attributed every unusual noise in the mine to 'the ghost of Micky Brennan'.

The case of Micky Brennan's father illustrates that some of the survivors found it difficult to cope with grief in the long lonely days after the funerals. For that reason the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Convent, Wollongong, were to be found continually in the homes of the bereaved families, and D'Arcy-Irvine, a future bishop, reinforced his reputation as an outstanding pastor by visiting every bereaved family, no matter to what church they belonged. Canon Len Abbott, interviewed in 1983, made this passing reference to Mt. Kembla as he recalled it in the 1940s: '... the old mining families, they were church people, they were christian people, that was all the product of what had been done for them following the great mine explosion forty years before and it stuck'.



G.A. D'Arcy-Irvine.

The Mt. Kembla Disaster Monument

An interesting insight into Illawarra religion is afforded by the background to, and unveiling of, the monument to the Mt. Kembla disaster. D'Arcy-Irvine was the only clergyman on the MacCabe-M'Murray memorial committee convened on 25 August 1903 to promote a suitable memorial to the disaster. The committee resolved on a stone obelisk after considering such alternative proposals as a university scholarship, a hospital ward, and medals for miners deemed proficient in their work. Committee members were divided over the siting of the monument, and were said to be 'like Noah's dove, unable to find a suitable resting place'. (*SCT*, 11 March 1905). D'Arcy-Irvine favoured the site at the top of Church Street just outside the rectory gates, but the monument was eventually sited at the junction of Crown and Keira Streets, the very heart of the town. This was more appropriate, for the disaster was not an Anglican preserve! D'Arcy-Irvine also wanted a little cross surrounded by laurel leaves on the monument. The committee vigorously debated this proposal, and D'Arcy-Irvine lost again, four votes to three. This interesting decision anticipated the decision not to have crosses on the Sydney war memorial.

The monument was unveiled on the afternoon of 12 August 1905 when the Mayor of Wollongong, J.A. Beatson, a devout Catholic, unwound the Union Jack from the stone, before a crowd estimated at between 4,000 and 5,000, about half the district population. Twelve speeches were scheduled for the occasion, the last five to be given by the clergy. It is evident that their thunder was well and truly stolen by their political and aldermanic fore runners. Local member, G.W. Fuller, gave the longest speech in which he reminded his would-be hearers (most of them were out of earshot) that there was always one above to whom they could look in times of disaster. He recited the hymn 'Abide with me' and prayed earnestly that He who changeth not might abide with those bereft by this disaster. It is clear that by the time the clergy were permitted to speak, there was little left to say. D'Arcy-Irvine, who spoke first for the clergy, as the Anglicans always did on these united occasions, reminded the assembled multitude that the two heroes who lost their lives in the disaster, MacCabe and M'Murray, 'were men who had the fear of God in their hearts'. Major MacCabe had held 'the responsible office of churchwarden' for many years, while M'Murray

was superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday school at Kembla Heights. Father Walsh spoke second, for on the few occasions when Catholics were represented at such functions they expected to be heard immediately after the Anglican clergyman. Father Walsh emphasised the importance of perpetuating the memory of the victims, for 'the spirit of Christianity breathed, and the trumpet-toned voice of St. Paul says: "I am unwilling that ye should be forgetful of the departed"', (a very loose translation of I Thessalonians 4.13). 'It should be the fervent prayer', Father Walsh continued, 'of all present that the souls of the victims were now in the full enjoyment of beatification'. The priest's words must have sounded curious to Protestants, whose Bible attributed no such words to St. Paul and who had never heard of beatification. The speeches became ever shorter as the Methodist minister, J.B. Holmes, was succeeded by the Presbyterian minister, D. M'Kay Barnett. The Congregational minister, R.B. Reynolds, waived his right of speaking, and the twelve speeches were mercifully reduced to eleven.



Unveiling Mt. Kembla Disaster Monument, 1905.

The civic ceremony completed, however, the Protestant clergy that evening held a united memorial service. Many preferred to go to the Town Hall where Cook's electric biograph showed a film of

the great sculling champion, William Beach of Dapto, but between 1,500 and 2,000 found their way to the religious service. D'Arcy-Irvine presided, informing the congregation that in future the Wollongong Ministers Open-Air Mission would hold meetings at the foot of the Memorial. This hint that the clergy were determined to 'improve on the disaster' was made explicit by the preacher, Barnet, who said that 'it was the wont of the great Teacher of Galilee to seize hold on passing events to press home upon man important truth'. Barnet took for his subject 'The Parable of the Coal Mine'. Its moralistic and evangelistic emphases are typical of the period. Just as coal mines need a constant supply of fresh and pure air, said Barnet, so man needs constant supplies of the purifying influences of God's Holy Spirit, that he may, by his life and conduct, set such an example of Godly living as to silently but effectively 'convince those that are ungodly of their ungodly deeds', and thus rescue men from sin and death.

MacCabe's and M'Murray's deed was 'a noble and Christ-like act', the preacher concluded. And what 'strengthened and sustained them and urged them on to herculean effort' was their trust in God. Both 'were men of exemplary, Godly life, both walked with God in life, and now they walk with Him in Glory, for they are worthy'. The service ended with the hymn 'The sands of time are sinking, the dawn of Heaven breaks'.

Certainly for Illawarra a new dawn was breaking. Heavy industry was about to transform Port Kembla, eventually eclipsing mining in economic significance. This eclipse, which coincided with the passing of Ebenezer Vickery, also meant the beginning of the end of Methodist dominance in Illawarra religion. But the end would not come quickly.¹

¹In the 1890s Australian Methodist membership had grown more rapidly than that of any other denomination, and in Illawarra its growth rate of over 4% per annum was greater than that (3%) for Australia as a whole. In the first decade of the new century, its annual rate of growth was to be more rapid still, and the only membership figures available for the municipality of Wollongong as late as 1921 suggest that Methodism was still the strongest Illawarra denomination with the possible exception of Catholics for whom figures are not available.

TABLE V

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN WOLLONGONG MUNICIPALITY 1921

	Anglican	Methodist	Presbyterian	Baptist	Congreg.	Catholic
Nominal adherents (1921 census)	2906	694	607	48	279	1805
Members on Church roll	170	403	160	No Church	97	n.a.

(Source: D. Hansen, *The Churches and Society in N.S.W.*, Ph.D. thesis, Macquarie University, 1978, p.417)

PART III

THE INDUSTRIAL AGE: THE CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE OF CATHOLIC SEPARATISM

CHAPTER SIX

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE: HEAVY INDUSTRY, STRIKES, WAR, AND EPIDEMIC 1903 – 1919

TABLE OF EVENTS

1903 – 1919

1903

Opening of a new mine at North Bulli: Coledale township laid out.

9 August - *Opening of first St. Stephen's (C of E) Port Kembla*
Helensburgh became a separate Methodist Circuit.

1904

Australian Catholic Truth Society formed.

12 March - *St. John's Church of England, Austinmer, opened.*

17 January - *New St. Joseph's Convent, Bulli, opened.*

15 May - *Presbyterian churches opened at Helensburgh and*
Clifton.

14 September - *New Methodist Church opened at Dapto.*

1905

20 October - *Opening of brick Presbyterian Church Balgownie.*

26 August - *Foundation stone laid of Corrimal Methodist*
Church

11 January - *Services ceased at Foxground Methodist chapel*
('systematic non-attendance')

29 October - *Baptist Church fellowship commenced at Woonona.*

1 March - *Opening of new Salvation Army Barracks, Keira*
Street.

1906

- 26 August - *St John's Keiraville (C of E) opened (Parsons Street, West Wollongong).*
- 10 October - *Corrimal Conventual District formed (C of E).*
- 6 May - *Extensions to St. Francis Xavier opened.*

1907

Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company (ER & S) opened at Port Kembla.

Hospital moved to Garden Hill and renamed the Wollongong District Hospital

- 7 July - *All Saints Nowra (C of E) consecrated.*
- 27 January - *New St. Joseph's Convent opened at Corrimal.*
- August - *Port Kembla Congregational Church sold to the Methodists for 15 pounds.*

1908

All Saints Austinmer (C of E) extended.

St. Oswald's Coledale (C of E) built.

- 26 July - *St Andan's Balgownie (C of E) opened.*
 - 14 June - *First Mass in RC Church Coledale.*
 - 6 December - *Opening of New Mater Dolorosa Church, Balgownie (RC).*
 - 12 June - *Presbyterian Church Albion Park, opened.*
- Corrimal Methodist Church opened*
- 8 August - *Methodist Church Coledale opened.*
 - 2 August - *Baptist Church Woonona, opened.*

1909

Great Coal Miners' Strike.

John Charles Wright appointed Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

Thirroul C of E hall built.

11 January - St. Pauls Shellharbour (C of E) consecrated.

28 May - Methodist Church Woonona, opened.

1911

Michael Kelly appointed Catholic Archbishop of Sydney.

14 November - All Saints C of E Figtree opened.

Helensburgh RC Parish created.

31 May - Presbyterian Church Thirroul opened.

21 February - Methodist Church Port Kembla opened.

9 April - Methodist Church Thirroul opened.

1912

Bombo Mission Church (C of E) opened - later St. Oswald's.

2 August - Methodist Church Keiraville opened

1913

(March-May) - Coal Strike.

Erection of Port Kembla Power Station commenced by Department of Public Works.

Clifton, Coledale, and Austinmer made a separate conventional district (C of E)

20 December - Laying of foundation stone of St. George's Stanwell Park (C of E) - opened 14/2/1914

26 October - New St. Columbkille's Church Corrimal, opened (RC).

New Presbyterian Church built at Corrimal.

24 January - Congregational Church Fellowship formed at Kewarville with 12 members.

1914

August - World War I (to 1918)

Visit to Wollongong by John Sulman, Town Planner.

24 October - St. Alban's Corrimal (C of E) opened and dedicated.

Port Kembla Presbyterian Home Mission station opened.

Built Methodist Circuit created (included Woonona, Thirroul, Austinmer and Coledale)

1915

Railway marshalling yards and locomotive depot established at Thirroul.

Leigh College opened Sydney to train Methodist ministers

19 December - Opening of new Presbyterian Church Kembla Heights.

1916

21 July - 6 o'clock closing of hotels introduced.

Wollongong High School opened.

January - Present Presbyterian Church Woonona opened.

1917

The Great Strike.

7 October - Mt. Drummond (Coniston) Union Church opened.

1918

Metal Manufacturers Ltd. commenced output at Port Kembla

15 August - Wongawilli church hall opened (C of E)

21 April - New RC Convent and Parish Hall opened at Nowra,

Bull's Salvation Army relocated to Woomara

1919

Influenza Epidemic - 11,500 die in Australia

2 March - Opening of St. Patrick's RC school/church Port Kembla

16 August - Rosemont Union Church opened.

January - New Presbyterian Church projected for Port Kembla

Twelve months after the 1902 Revival, Robert Robertson, one of the missionaries, visited Illawarra 'to ascertain as far as possible whether the spiritual effects of last year's mission were remaining or otherwise' and was 'delighted' to discover that the results appeared to be lasting 'to a most satisfactory extent' (*JM*, 15 April 1903). It seemed that at last a method had been found of 'reaching the masses for Christ': the Mission had changed eternally not only the lives of churchgoers, but also of 'scoffers, infidels, Roman Catholics, sceptics, and other great sinners' (*JM*, 19 February 1902).

1. THE IMPACT OF REVIVAL

The Revival was a psychic revolution coming at the beginning of the social revolution of large-scale industrialisation in Illawarra. In the long-term, industrialisation was to influence the churches profoundly, but for the next decade the Revival's impact was more evident, at least for the Methodist church, the only one for which we have statistical information.

In the Wollongong Methodist Circuit (excluding Helensburgh in 1903), 736 inquirers registered with the Methodist Church. Membership increased from 278 in 1901 to 614 in 1902, a gain of 335. Therefore 48.5% of mission converts entered into formal membership. The number of 'attendants and adherents' increased from 2118 in 1901 to 2500 in 1902, a gain of 382, a figure which probably includes members. Sunday school scholars increased from 842 to 955, a gain of 113 of whom 71 were over 16 years of age. Hence the major gains in the Sunday schools were of older teenagers.

That these gains were lasting is clear from Table V. The gains following the Revival were small, but the high point reached in 1902 was at least maintained. The average annual growth rate in church membership in the decade 1901-11 was 8.7% or double the rate for the decade 1891-1901 (4.2%). In the absence of membership rolls we cannot be certain, but it would appear that for the converts who became full members of the Methodist church at the mission there was a very high retention rate in the ensuing decade.

TABLE V
WOLLONGONG METHODIST CIRCUIT
MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER STATISTICS 1901 - 1912

	1901 ¹	1902 ²	1903 ³	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
Churches	12	12	11	11	12	12	12	13	13	15	17	18
Other preaching places	2	3	6	5	4	5	8	5	6	8	5	3
Ministers	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Local preachers	22	19	17	18	19	27	26	27	31	27	31	29
Class leaders	41	10	11	11	7	7	7	7	9	7	7	6
Members - full	278	487	447 ⁴	441 ⁵	494 ⁶	496	473	445	498	504	521	521
" - trial	5	81	15	10	20	12	0	0	13	2	8	13
" - junior	0	50	12	36	30	7	0	0	25	25	15	15
Adherents & Attendants	2118	2500	2390	2170	2260	2200	2500	2510	2730	2670	2770	2600
Sunday schools number	10	9	12	13	12	12	12	13	17	17	17	18
S.S. teachers	116	125	122	132	142	134	113	124	139	130	123	152
S.S. scholars	842	955	955	1066	988	974	799	908	1163	1110	1011	1062
S.S. scholars over 16 yrs	43	114	116	127	139	120	90	128	107	94	103	104

1. Primitive and Wesleyan Methodist figures added together.
Source - NSW Conference Minutes, 1902.

2. Source - NSW Conference Minutes, 1903.
Reflect growth from Simultaneous Missions.

3. Helensburgh became a separate circuit with its own minister. For 1903-12 Wollongong and Helensburgh figures have been added together.

4. Returns also show that 5 members transferred in from other circuits, 51 removed to other circuits, 7 deaths.

5. As for 4 - 9, 32, 7.

6. 3 deaths, no details of transferring members in 1905-12.

2. THE INDUSTRIALISATION OF PORT KEMBLA

Port Kembla, the industrial heart of Illawarra, was named after Mt. Kembla. In 1883 the Mt. Kembla Coal and Oil Co. built a jetty at the port, and a small population settled around it. In 1898 work began on the deepwater Port Kembla Harbour which was opened in 1903. The Dapto Smelting works collapsed in 1905, but economic ruin was averted by the opening in 1907 of the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company (E.R. & S.) at Port Kembla, whence half-erected houses were removed from Dapto. The refinery grew

slowly until the demand for a copper manufacturing industry created by World War I transformed the factory into 'the largest of its kind in the Empire'. Work began on the Port Kembla power station in 1913, and the next year the town was described 'as a city in the making' (*DM*, 17 July 1914). The War prompted the Federal Government to reorganise the Australian metal industry, and in 1916 Metal Manufacturers opened at Port Kembla.



Dapto Smelting Works, 1899.

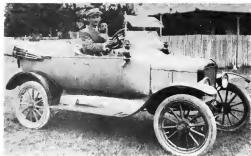
Typically, churches held services at Port Kembla before the commencement of major industrial development. Congregationalist and Presbyterian services were held from about 1890 in a small corrugated shed rented from the Mt. Kembla Coal and Oil Co. The first official Anglican service was held in the same shed on 12 March 1899 by D'Arcy-Irvine. Following the 1902 Revival the Methodists held services at Port Kembla in a tent. In 1903 the Anglicans opened their first church (of corrugated iron), replacing it with the present St. Stephen's in 1925. In 1905 the Congregationalists purchased a building which had been used for worship in connexion with an Aborigines Mission, which had terminated when most of the aborigines were removed from the district. That same building was purchased in 1907 from the Congregationalists by the Methodists, who opened their first church at Port Kembla in 1911. The Presbyterians opened

a Home Mission Station at Port Kembla in 1914 and resolved to build a church there in 1919, the same year the Catholics opened St. Patrick's school/church. This uncharacteristically staggered church-building programme reflects the uncertainties and vicissitudes of early industrial development at Port Kembla.

Charles Hoskins and the Rector of Dapto

To the north of Wollongong, the mining centre of Thirroul was transformed into a railway town by the advent in 1915 of shunting and marshalling yards, employing 160 railwaymen. New coal mines were opened at Coledale in 1903 and Wongawilli, West of Dapto, in 1917. The latter, which reversed the fading economic fortunes of Dapto, was owned by Charles Hoskins, father of the Australian steel industry. Four of his nine children predeceased him, and in their memory he had the Hoskins Memorial Presbyterian Church, Lithgow, erected in 1925, in the middle of negotiations resulting in the transfer of the steelmaking industry from Lithgow to Port Kembla.

In its beauty and grandeur, the Hoskins Memorial Church may be contrasted with the Anglican church hall at Wongawilli, which before its closure in 1972 was a strong contender for the prize of



Rev. W.E. Godson, 1920.

humblest ecclesiastical edifice on the South Coast. At a meeting of Dapto Parish Council on 29 November 1917, the rector, William Godson, raised the matter of 'securing a piece of land at West Dapto near the mine for the purpose of erecting a building thereon for religious purposes ... which also might be used for the benefit of the people about the mine'. Godson's move, made in the same year as the opening of the mine, is more evidence of the commendable speed with which the churches then responded to every economic development. There is not much evidence in the history of Illawarra Christianity of unwillingness to relocate in response to industrial development, said to be typical of English churches during the Industrial Revolution.

Approached by the Parish Council, Hoskins had no intention of allowing the church to lose momentum. He agreed to grant the land on condition that a building be erected in six months, to the cost of which his company contributed 10 pounds. The condition was met, and the building was opened on 15 August 1918 by the Archbishop of Sydney, J.C. Wright. Humble it may have been, but services were held there continuously for over half a century.

3. CHURCHES AND INDUSTRIAL UNREST

Coal-mining and industrialisation brought occasional bitter confrontation between the three sides of industry: labour, capital, and government. The role of the churches in strikes is not easily summarised. Certainly the churches did not automatically side with the bosses, but the clergy tended to oppose a confrontation model of industrial relations and sometimes mediated in local disputes. If the government became involved, the clergy frequently, but not invariably, supported the government.

Hugh Walker Taylor, first rector of Bulli, had mediated in a number of coal disputes in the 1880s and 1890s. A letter from W. Young, secretary of the South Bulli Miners' Lodge, in the 1890 Maritime Strike, shows the miners' respect for Taylor.

We, the employees of South Bulli accept your offer and appreciate your willingness to step into the breach existing between us and the coal-owners, to act as mediator, hoping your kind efforts will bear good fruit.

Perhaps a reason for the success of clerical mediators was that some coal-owners like Vickery and Robson were devout Christians who were more amenable to approaches from the clergy than to 'interference' by the government which they always deplored. The Maritime Strike also saw the Wesleyan minister at Bulli arranging for the printing of his 'solution to the social problem now perplexing society': 'prudence, frugality, and good management are excellent artists for mending bad times' (*LM*, 25 September 1890).

During the period covered by this chapter the most serious disputes were the 1909 coal strike, which lasted four and a half months, the 1913 coal strike which lasted three months, and the 1917 general strike which started on the railways and spread rapidly, miners being included among the 95,000 workers who downed tools in NSW. Cardinal Moran offered to mediate in the 1909 strike, and waxing radical in his old age, prescribed nationalisation as the remedy. The 1909 strike was fuelled by the revolutionary ideals of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) who had imbibed Marxist beliefs and advocated militancy. Christian unionists preferred co-operation to confrontation, were more at ease with the paternalism of the bosses, and worked to maintain the system rather than overthrow it.

Christian Unionist

A good example of such a unionist was Henry Stanley of Corrimal. Born of English parents in New York in 1863 he was educated in England and became a choir boy in St. Alban's Church, Holborn, London. He named his eldest son after the church and, following his arrival in Australia in 1885, was instrumental in establishing and naming St. Alban's Church of England, Corrimal, opened in 1896 on a site given by J.C. Jones, mine manager. Ebenezer Vickery was a subscriber, as was Mrs. H.O. MacCabe. Stanley was also instrumental in the removal of St. Alban's to another site, where the present church designed by Edmund Blacket's son, Cyril, was opened in 1914.

For almost 50 years Stanley worked for the South Bulli Company owned by the Vickerys. He was a valued member of the Miners' Federation and was lodge secretary of South Bulli mine for many years, earning the trust of men and management alike. He also served



St. Alban's Anglican Church, Corral.

the mining fraternity through active participation in friendly societies and was a member of the Independent Order of Oddfellows. He died in 1935 after four decades of service to St. Alban's Corral as lay reader, churchwarden, and Sunday school superintendent. It was men like Stanley who made 'the system' work for the mutual benefit of miners and owners.

Barnet's barney

The churches did not always emerge unscathed from their involvement in strikes. Wollongong has had few more distinguished ministers than Donald McKay Barnet, Presbyterian minister of St. Andrew's from 1903 to 1921. Destined to be moderator of his denomination in 1927, he was the son of James Barnet, colonial architect, whose many splendid buildings made Sydney one of the world's finest Victorian cities. In spite of his pedigree and talents he was not spoken well of by all his fellow men - particularly strikers.

In the 1917 Strike the NSW Government assumed control of the mines and worked them with 'scab' labourers called 'loyalists', a decision which led to the eventual defeat of the unionists. At a meeting of 'the Citizen's Association' in Wollongong in August 1917,

Barnet's motion was passed congratulating the premier, Kiama-born member for Wollondilly, George Fuller. The premier's stand, said the motion, was not against unionism, but was an act of self-defence, since clearly the dispute was designed to attack the government. One Ben Jones of Figtree challenged Barnet to explain why he was partial to the government and why he imagined either that Fuller was in favour of unions for 'the wage slaves of this Commonwealth' or that this strike was an attack on the government (SCT, 31 August, 7 September 1917).

Some eminent clergymen thought Ben Jones closer to the truth than the Rev. Barnet. The Rev. Dr. T. Roseby, speaking at the diamond Jubilee of Wollongong Congregational church on 24 September 1917 thundered from the pulpit:

And the miner! Let us do justice to the miner; there is nothing which can beat his self-sacrificing heroism, but he has been brutally misled by those with very deficient feelings of humanity drawing him into the slough in which he is today. What does the church stand for? It stands for the Kingdom of God and His justice. It stands for truth. It stands for freedom. And make no mistake! These great, definite eternal Christian forces are going to win (SCT, 28 September 1917).

Complicating the point at issue in the 1917 Strike was that the nation was then at war, and Prime Minister Billy Hughes castigated the strikers for their 'treachery' when the A.I.F. was being carved up in France. The cause of the strike was drowned in a flood of emotion, but what most strikers remembered was the heroism of their resistance as they and their families were reduced to eating grass. They also remembered the few who broke ranks because they could not live on a diet of grass.

Alderton's altercation

A sad sequel to the strike was enacted a decade later in Figtree, home town of Barnet's irate opponent. At the annual vestry meeting of All Saints' Figtree in 1927 one churchwarden refused to sign the financial statement. The rector, F.H.D. Alderton, who chaired the meeting, said that the statement was valid anyway since the other two wardens had signed it. 'Not so', challenged the churchwarden, 'read Ordinance 41, section 9'. The rector did so, but ruled never-

theless that the statement was valid. 'I'll appeal to the Archbishop,' said the churchwarden. 'You can't', interjected some know-all who was enjoying the churchwarden's discomfort, 'he's away'. 'Well, I'll appeal to the Administrator, D'Arcy-Irvine'. The rector said soothingly that he would be happy to bide by the Bishop's decision. So the meeting resolved that the financial statement should be printed.

The churchwarden then moved that the Committee should consist of six members. The meeting decided on three, with an obvious eye to excluding the troublemaker. Following the election the churchwarden claimed that the successful candidates were not eligible to stand. The rector replied wearily, 'You might have said that before the election', but he added that he would have the election again if the meeting so wished. The meeting did not wish (19 against, 3 for). The churchwarden said he would protest to the Bishop. The rector said he would bide by the Bishop's decision.

The churchwarden could take no more. He stood up in the middle of a speech by the rector's warden and stormed out, taking with him the Minute Book which has not been recovered to this day, and his one loyal supporter, his wife.

Now why? 'He was not a happy man', one who was interviewed said. Another, who knew nothing of the scene at the vestry meeting, said that towards the close of his life that churchwarden was losing his mind, and the reason was that in the 1917 strike he changed sides, became a strike-breaker, and the local population never forgave him and hounded him to his grave. Twelve years after the strike, the locals were still tin-kettling him, meeting outside his house at night, banging on tins and shouting 'scab'. Young children, born after the strike, were taught to call him 'scab' and bang tins not knowing why their elders required this strange behaviour of them. No wonder the poor man lost his mind.

The rector's warden struggled vainly to conceal his distaste for his fellow warden. Both men were engine drivers, working for the Mt. Kembla Coal and Oil Company. Ten days after the disastrous vestry meeting, the Figtree church committee asked the rector to request the churchwarden's resignation as Sunday school superintendent. As we saw at Bulli during the 1887 strike, church congregations are not

impervious to industrial bitterness. For what it is worth, however, the Church was more merciful than the wider community, and that man's wife and children continued to be highly valued members of the Figtree congregation.

A Christian radical

Not all Christian union leaders counselled moderation and restraint. One who maintained unflinchingly in the face of governmental harangues that the cause of the 1917 strikers was 'morally right' and consistent with 'the dignity of man' and 'Christian ideals' was Albert Charles Willis, General Secretary from 1916 to 1925 of the Miners Federation which he had helped to establish. Willis was born in Wales in 1876, and was raised in the revivalistic and radical atmosphere of the nonconformity of the Welsh coalfields. In 1899 he was appointed lay preacher in a small Welsh denomination known as the Church of God. He attended Ruskin College, named after the Christian economist John Ruskin who was so critical of the dominant *laissez-faire* school of political economists. Willis graduated an enthusiastic guild socialist. Arriving in Australia in 1911, he so impressed the miners of the South Coast with his intellect and powers of leadership that they elected him first president and then secretary of the district union. The Illawarra churches hardly fitted his ideal of the Welsh chapel, and he joined none of them, but accepted invitations to preach in many Protestant churches.

Moving to Sydney in 1916, Willis was elected state president of the Labor Party (1923-25) and leader of the Labor Party in the Legislative Council and Vice-President of the Executive Council during the Lang Government. He formed the Industrial Christian Fellowship, which was endorsed by the NSW ALP Executive. The ICF declared its objective to the removal of conflict (which was not so much between Capital and Labour as between man and the machine) by

the application of the precepts and principles of Jesus of Nazareth to politics, industry and social life. The same ethics for the home, the workshop, the Party, the congregation, the nation and the community of nations.

Grand words. But to Willis they were more than religious rhetoric. He was rarely sentimental and never soft-headed. Like all

politicians he was interested in what works and in power, but his Christianity gave him distinctive insights and clear-cut goals. The Labour movement, he declared, must be a clean movement: its philosophy must be brought into accord with its action, and 'he discarded the conventional Labour practice of speaking in one manner and acting in another'. Industrial relations, he believed, require much of individuals who should be men of character, prepared to consider their duties as well as their rights. The distribution of wealth was to be settled not by trial of force but by the spirit of brotherhood. With the experience of the Welsh chapel in mind, he wanted the rank and file to be educated in economic principles so that they would adopt an intellectual approach to society's basic economic problems.

Willis's campaign to reconstruct society on Christian lines failed. Sadly, the ideals of the majority of Australia's Labor leaders had been forged outside the ambit of theological reflection. The Labor Party, replete with rationalists and Roman Catholics, could only maintain unity by excluding sectarian squabbles. This tended to exclude all religious speculation, and it is surprising that the Wollongong branch of the ALP invited both F.C. Hall, curate of St. Michael's, Wollongong, and W.E. Godson, rector of Dapto, to address it in 1916.

So Willis' exotic thought wilted in a hostile climate. Most churchmen, too, rejected him. A.E. Talbot, Anglican Dean of Sydney, supported the Industrial Christian Fellowship, but the majority of clergy believed Willis to be a dangerous revolutionary. His opposition to conscription, which so divided Australians during World War I, was anathema to conservative Protestants who thought conscription essential to the defence of the Empire. Willis' opposition stemmed not from anti-imperialism or anti-royalism, a temptation for the Catholic Irish, nor from the standard socialist line that the workers were being used to fight the capitalists' war. Willis believed that conscription was a transgression of the worker's inalienable democratic rights. Welsh nonconformity was allergic to compulsion and authoritarianism.

After the 1917 Strike, Willis emerged as the leading advocate of the One Big Union (OBU) which it was hoped would force the employers to their knees, replace arbitration, and even displace the

parliamentary system. The OBU campaign was launched on a sea of Marxism, promising to banish 'capitalism from the earth and God from the sky'. This sort of talk was enough to make the Catholic bishops join with the Protestants in denouncing the OBU. In Illawarra, no cleric put the conservative Christian attitude to the OBU as clearly as William Godson, rector of Dapto, rejoicing in his agreeable relationship with that captain of industry, Charles Hoskins. Just a month after the opening of the Wongawilli church hall, Godson preached on the subject of the OBU:

The captains of great industries were there because of their ability, their energy, their personal character, smaller men, owing to numerical superiority, may force them out and seize upon and occupy their places, but they would never be able to fill them, and the last state of Labor might easily become a vast deal worse than the first.

That there was grave injustice in the present system of the distribution of wealth was very apparent. Some men had more than they needed. The vast majority had a good deal less. Every honest, steady man ought to be assured of sufficient.

The advocate of the One Big Union seemed to forget that economic revolution in their favour was not going to usher in a labor millennium. There must be a revolution in man's character, too. Before we could have a satisfactory economic revolution we must have an individual Christian revolution. We must get back to Jesus Christ as man's only hope, and remember He advocated not strife but brotherhood,

(SCT, 6 September 1918)

(On Willis, see I.E. Young, 'A.C. Willis, Welsh Nonconformist, and the Labor Party in New South Wales, 1911-33', *Journal of Religious History*, 2.4, 1963, pp.303-13).

4. SECTARIAN OUTBURSTS AND ECUMENICAL EXPERIMENTS

Relations between Catholics and Protestants in the first two decades of the present century fell to an all-time low. Protestants, feeling Catholics had captured the recently-formed Labor Party, lost interest in social reform and became increasingly conservative. Catholics, always in quest of state aid and now stirred to oppose conscription by Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne, politicked 'in the interests of piety'. Plenary Councils of the Catholic Church

from 1885 to 1937 repeatedly prohibited mixed marriages, a move apparently unpopular with everyone except the Catholic clergy for whom it could never be a personal issue. The Catholic Truth Society, commenced in Australia in 1904, provocatively condemned Protestant error as energetically as it commended Catholic truth.

Early in the new century the Methodist minister of Bulli stirred the sectarian pot by claiming that Methodists should pay lower taxes than Catholics because gaols were full of Catholics, and Protestants should not have to pay for their keep. It is true that Catholics were then over-represented in gaols and in the police force, but this is more a reflection of their lower social origins than a reflection on their religion. Unmoved by such sociological realities, Catholic and Protestant youths at Figtree came to blows in response to the Bulli minister's claim.

It was also at Figtree that one of the more remarkable adaptations to sectarianism occurred. All Saints Church of England had wondrous Sunday school picnics, organised by a great cook, Mrs. Spinks. The ginger beer flowed freely like the nearby American Creek in flood, and, oh, the cake! So, all the Catholic children wanted to come, too. In the previous century, Catholic Sunday school picnics had been occasionally organised, but they were now a thing of the past. With the Protestant children, however, most Figtree Catholic children attended Unanderra Public School opened in 1878, and they knew all about preparations for the Sunday school picnic. 'They cannot come', said Mrs. Spinks, who was as strict a Protestant as any. 'Oh', said the weaker sisters in the congregation, 'you can't say "no" to the kids. Let the Catholic kids come'. 'Very well', decreed Mrs. Spinks, 'but they cannot enter the races'. And it was so. The Protestant children ran their little legs off while the Catholic kids stood on the sidelines guzzling ginger beer and scoffing cake.

In 1921 J.C. Wright, the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, appealed for support for a girls' hostel in Wollongong on the grounds that Protestants would otherwise have to stay in Catholic hostels. By then, however, Catholics were beginning to weary of sectarian strife, and it was also in 1921 that the Catholic Archbishop, Michael Kelly, admonished a Wollongong priest who had advertised to lecture on Irish questions, 'Attend to the teaching of the Catechism, parochial instructions in matters of faith and good works, the Confessional,

the Schools, the house visitation, and regular priestly study'.

Evangelical Protestants continued to co-operate both at the clerical level, through the Protestant Ministers Association, and in combined church services. Wollongong Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist congregations even held a united communion service, described by the press as 'an event of interest in local church history' (*SCT*, 5 April, 1918).

More Union Churches

United action among the same three churches led to the opening on 7 October 1917 of Mt. Drummond Union Church (now Coniston United Church). Mt. Drummond, south of Wollongong was a new



Opening of Mt. Drummond Union Church, 1917; front centre is Rev. E.W. Weymouth.

residential area, and the church, an ornate structure of fibro-cement, outlined with boards painted black, was the first public building to be erected there. First mooted by C.S. Olver, Congregational minister, as an outreach by his denomination, and carried on by his successor, E. Weymouth. Supported by the Methodist and Presbyterian ministers, the cause was described in the press as 'somewhat unique in the district' (*SCF*, 12 October 1917). It was not to remain unique for long. On the nearby Rosemont Estate, West Wollongong, the Rosemont Union Church was erected in 1919. Whereas the closest links of the Mt. Drummond church were with the Congregationalists, the Rosemont church was owned by the local Session of the Presbyterian church. Both churches were as successful as Sherbrooke Union Church closed in 1903, and Coniston United Church is now one of the oldest union churches in Australia.

5. WORLD WAR I

With the announcement of war on 4 August 1914, the Protestant churches of Wollongong held a United Patriotic Church service to 'offer prayer to Almighty God for the welfare of our Nation in the present crisis'. About 1,250 attended, 'striking evidence of ... a spirit of faith in a true and just cause' (*JM*, 11 August 1914). About half the total of all Australian males aged between 18 and 45 volunteered to join the Australian Imperial Force. Of these 59,000 were killed, and 212,000 wounded. Such carnage deprived Australia of some of its most creative and energetic minds, dooming the nation to mediocrity for a generation. At the local level, statistics suggest that churches must have been weakened by the enlistment of a high percentage of their adult male parishioners. By February 1916, for example, 110 men from the Anglican parish of St. Michael's, Wollongong, were on active service. By the end of the war, 55 men from the parish had been killed. From the coal-mining parish of Bulli, 52 Anglicans had enlisted by July 1915. Even the thinly-populated farming area of Figtree gave 26 Anglicans to the war effort of whom 7 died, and from Dapto, 57 enrolled of whom 9 died.

Business as usual

It would appear, however, that Illawarra churches have been damaged, at least financially, more by strikes and recessions than by wars which stimulated industrial development and have been times

of relative prosperity. The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, J.C. Wright, decreed that the first consideration of the clergy in war-time 'should be the maintenance of religious life'. The clergy of all denominations agreed, and church building and activities continued unabated: Bible studies, prayer meetings, missions, Sunday school picnics, choir practices, fund-raising socials and concerts, support of overseas missions, and the fashionable lecture on 'Genesis and Geology'. The continuity was important to the war effort: normality and stability were essential to civilian morale.

Wollongong Catholics during the War built a handsome two-storey presbytery next to St. Francis Xavier's church. The building, now part of the Bishop's house, cost 2,681 pounds and was opened a year after the arrival of Father J. Dunne, a tall Irishman popular with Catholics and Anglicans alike. Michael Kelly, Archbishop of Sydney, in his address at the opening, said that Wollongong was growing so rapidly that a new church would have to be built on a site nearer the centre of town, a suggestion he repeated 18 years later when opening major extensions to the church (*JM*, 4 July 1915; 17 February 1932).

The rural areas of Illawarra also prospered during the war. At the 1915 vestry meeting of Christ Church, Kiama, the rector, H.M.A. Pearce, reported that the year's receipts had never been higher, that the rectory had been renovated, a new organ obtained, and the number of monthly communicants had increased to an average of eighty.

There were those who objected to the Church's 'business-as-usual' mentality during wartime, particularly the continuing support of foreign missions. The clergy replied correctly, if moralistically, that there was no observable reduction either in money spent on 'drink, tobacco, picture shows and luxuries generally'. Furthermore, as the rector of Bulli reminded his parishioners, it was during the Napoleonic Wars that 'our greatest religious societies were founded'. This claim was also correct and was calculated shrewdly to appeal to well-established loyalties: the Baptist Missionary Society founded in 1792, the London Missionary Society (1795), Church Missionary Society (1799), British and Foreign Bible Society (1804), and Wesleyan Missionary Society (1813) were then venerated by Evangelicals in all the Australian Protestant churches.

The contribution of churches to the War effort

The churches have been criticised for the inadequacy of their contribution to the war effort. 'Even in their charitable work' complains Michael McKernan, 'the churches were clearly outstripped by bodies like the Red Cross, founded in Australia in 1914, or the Australian Comforts Fund, another organisation founded specifically to meet war's demands' (*Australian Churches at War*, 1980, p.2). This is an unfair criticism. The Red Cross, launched in Australia nine days after war broke out, would have been much weaker were it not for the support of churches, churchmen and, especially churchwomen. The Red Cross Austinmer branch, for example, was formed in late August 1914 with Mrs. O.G. Dent, the rector's wife as secretary. Mrs. Shaw, wife of Bulli's rector in 1918 was vice-president of the local Red Cross. The work of the Red Cross was commended to Bulli parishioners in the *Parish Gazette* for December 1914. Offertories at Helensburgh Church of England at a service of intercession which commenced the new year of 1915 were for the Red Cross, as were takings at church concerts at Helensburgh and Corrimal. Throughout the war similar functions were held for the Belgian Relief Fund, a children's fund known as 'the Babies Kit', and 'the War Chest'. It is surely to the credit of the churches that their clergy have not attempted to limit the charity of their members to denominational organisations.

Among the specifically church contributions to the war effort were recreational tents erected for soliders in army camps. The Archbishop of Sydney's Soldiers Tent at Holsworthy near Liverpool was supported by Illawarra Anglican churches throughout the war. It cost 12 pounds a week to run. C.S. Oliver, Congregational minister at Wollongong, enlisted as a soldier in 1915, and from camp wrote that such church clubs were doing a 'great service ... provide peace and opportunity for letter writing, a place of meeting, games and concerts, etc., and also minister to spiritual needs' (*IM*, 3 August 1915). Illawarra Salvationists contributed to an elaborate network of 35 'Hutment Institutes' established in training camps to bridge the gap between home and the rigours of military life. The Salvation Army backed these up with hostels in towns and cities for men on leave (Lt. Col. Bond., *The Army that went with the Boys*, 1919).

Attitudes of clergy to the War

A study of clerical pronouncements on the war shows that while the clergy shared many typical Australian attitudes, they were not blinded by patriotism or devotion for the British Empire. And while they did not imagine that the war would agonise on for as long as it did, they did not share the unrealistic optimism characteristic of so many Australians at the beginning of the war. The clergy were practised at warning their hearers that nothing worthwhile was won without a price, and pricking the bubble of false optimism was part of their stock in trade. A good example of the hopeful realism of the clergy was penned by Philip Dowe, rector of Bulli:

We thank God that the tide of war is slowly flowing in our favour. The Germans are being slowly but steadily beaten back from the soil of France and of Russia; and their losses are terrific ... But the war will be long and costly, both in money and in lives; and we must be prepared to share the loss (*Parish Gazette*, December 1914).

Few among the clergy doubted that the cause of the allies was just, and that Germany was to blame. 'Love your enemies', Christ taught, however, and the Illawarra clergy sought to moderate anti-German feeling towards German Australians. 'We have many Germans among us', wrote Philip Dowe, 'who have come here to avoid Prussian militarism ... It would be a wicked shame to show ill-feeling towards them'. Dowe felt that the policy of internment of Germans resident in Australia was ill-advised: 'the country will lose the benefit of their industry, and we shall have to support them, and we have quite enough to do just now to support ourselves and our boys at the front' (*Parish Gazette*, June 1915).

As the war continued, and the casualties mounted, clerical pronouncements tended to become less moderate. Phrases such as 'the devilish devices of Germany' and 'their policy of frightfulness' crept into sermons. Germany came to be seen as the instrument of the Devil and had, therefore to be crushed. Dowe's successor at Bulli, Augustus Shaw, who had served as a rector first at Germanton (renamed Holbrook in 1915), identified the Kaiser, whose telephone number was said to be 666, with the 'final anti-Christ' (*SCT*, 18 October 1918).

Congregations, too, became decreasingly tolerant of Germans.

At the 1918 annual vestry meeting at St. Michael's Wollongong, two of Figtree's most respected Sunday school teachers moved and seconded that 'for the duration of the war no alien of enemy birth hold office in this church'. Some parishioners applauded when Charles Stubbin, the rector, ruled the motion out of order. The mover wished to have her protest recorded, nevertheless. The rector disallowed that also. Another parishioner said that had the motion been allowed he would have supported it strenuously: 'This land was at the moment permeated with German spies. He knew Germans whom he could trust, but some of those who were trusted were the most dangerous'. The rector had his way. The matter is not mentioned in the minutes, but the press reported it in copious detail (*SCT*, 19 April 1918).



Hanging the Kaiser, Corral, 1918.

Spy fever infected the churches. The secretary of the Evangelisation Society, representative of all the Protestant churches, wrote to the press to quash a 'persistent rumour' that one of their evangelists had been 'looked upon by the authorities as a German spy'. (*SCT*, 17 May 1918). At Balgownie Methodist Church an officer was removed for refusing to play or sing the national anthem when called upon to do so, a sure mark of disloyalty to the Empire (*SCT*, 21 June 1918).

In a sectarian age, Catholics were most often accused of disloyalty to the Empire because of the opposition of Daniel Mannix, Melbourne's coadjutor bishop, to conscription and because of the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916. Catholics were undoubtedly more ambivalent than Protestants about the blessings of the British Empire, but they shared with Protestants a keen distaste for the enemy. At St. Joseph's Convent in Dapto, little Kathleen Moran, dedicated the following sentiments in her essay book to the greater of glory of God and consecrated them in the name of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (following custom she wrote at the top of each page 'A.M.D.B.' and 'J.M.J.')

Never, probably, in the history of mankind, has there been such a widespread cry of distress, as is the outcome of this selfish German plot, against the liberty of Europe ... our own loyal Australians ... have gained for themselves a place in the pages of History ... to gaze over the progress of the allies during the war, none of them, have scarcely come up to the good and admirable work of our countrymen (B. O'Sullivan, *Nothing without God*, 1980, p.42f).

Apart from the dedication, no Protestant would have expressed it differently.

War-weariness and the second coming of Christ

As often happens at times of prolonged national crises, Christians began to long for the second coming of Christ in his millennial glory. At Bulli, Dowe was tempted to speculate on the precise date of the Lord's return, in spite of the Lord's own teaching, '... of that day and that hour knoweth no man' (Mark 13:32). The 'times of the Gentiles' which had begun in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar was to last for 2,520 days, each day standing for a year, wrote Dowe to his parishioners. Beginning from the captivity of Judah in 604 B.C., that brought the time to 1916 A.D. or, as he later calculated, 1920: 'at any time we may have the Second Coming of Christ, the First Resurrection and the taking away of Christ's waiting people ... the next Dispensation will follow with all its times of trouble ... until the final Judgement Day' (*Parish Gazette*, January 1917, January 1918). Dowe clearly thought of Christ's second coming as the only hope for a world plunging

deeper and deeper into the Wars and sorrows that are to mark the last days - we who are found watching and waiting for Christ shall be caught away with Him - to escape all these troubles, and to spend our millennium with the Lord (*Parish Gazette*, December 1917).



Philip W. Dowe.

Those who were not among the 'watching and waiting' were urged to turn to God before it was too late. In view of the nearness of Christ's return, missionary activity at home and abroad was the more imperative: 'One thing we must do if we would be ready for our Lord - we must be engaged in spreading His Kingdom' (*Parish Gazette*, January 1918).

'The War is of God'

The most distinctive view of the clergy on the war was that it was the judgment of God on a sinful people, that it was in accordance with God's providence, and that through sacrifice, suffering and devotion to duty, men would be elevated to a higher spiritual plane. 'Either this war is God's call to the nations to repentance,' wrote

Dowe, 'or else the greatest event of all history has no spiritual meaning'

A study of the text of sermons preached in Illawarra during the war reveals that the clergy's understanding of God's purpose in history, and the role of war in that purpose, was derived chiefly from a study of Old Testament wars. The battles in which the Israelites were led by Moses, Gideon and David showed that, when the people of Israel repented and prayed to God for victory, they prevailed. The next step was to argue that now the British Empire was God's chosen instrument to resist evil in the world. The war was allowed by God to challenge a materialistic, hedonistic people to forsake their sins and pursue that righteousness which alone 'exalteth a nation' (Proverbs 14.34). In practical terms, this meant the clergy were able to continue their established role of denouncing Sabbath-desecration, drinking, gambling, horse-racing, and dancing. Catholic clergy, even more practical in their reasoning, argued that the best way to turn from sin and to God was to come to the aid of the church. At a floral fete in aid of the St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, Building Fund, Father O'Gorman, administrator of St. Mary's, reasoned that:

if we looked at the war from the proper standpoint, we must come to the conclusion that the cause could be traced] to the fact that God was displeased with His people. There were frowns on the face of Providence and the teaching of the Holy Ghost was that the best thing to do was something which would remove that frown. He (O'Gorman) thought, therefore, that a work of this nature which was expressive of this fact that we regarded God as the most important of all beings, could not help but to make the Almighty pleased and bring back prosperity to our people. (*SCT*, 30 November 1917).

Removing reproachful sins

Sabbath-desecration was the first sin to be eradicated by a righteous nation. To the clerical mind, the Sabbath was desecrated chiefly by the absence of a large percentage of the population from church. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the President of the Wollongong Protestant Ministers' Association, C.S. Oliver, Congregationalist minister, lamented that 'probably 4,000 people don't go to church even once on any given Sunday, and a large proportion of them don't go at all from one year's end to another' (*JM*, 28 August 1914). The churches combined to organise Go-to-Church Sundays, inserting advertisements in the local press in September 1914, urging

readers to 'give your soul a chance' and 'experience the duty and privilege of attending the Public Worship of God'. Catholic clergy pitied such efforts, rather smugly assuming that absenteeism from church was a Protestant problem. Protestant churchgoing does appear to have increased in Illawarra during the war, but only marginally.

The clergy were more successful at hitching temperance to the patriotic band-waggon. On 3 April 1915 the Supreme Governor on earth of the Church of England, namely King George V, became a total abstainer for the duration of the war. The clergy enthusiastically endorsed the 'Follow the King' movement. Charles Stubbin, rector of Wollongong, persuaded the Mayor to initiate the movement in Illawarra. Mr. Pulsford, the guest speaker at the inaugural meeting, declared that anyone who 'treated a soldier to a drink, we are entitled to regard as a German spy' (SCT, 28 May 1915).

The temperance movement in NSW was headed by two outstanding social reformers, both Anglican clergymen: Francis Bertie Boyce to 1915 and then R.B.S. Hammond. In 1916 the NSW Government was persuaded to hold a referendum on hotel closing. The clergy were united in their vocal support for 6 o'clock closing, inserting advertisements in the local press such as 'Be patriotic .. We are fighting Germany, Austria and the drink. The greatest of these three deadly foes is the drink' (SCT, 2 June 1916). At Bulli, Dowe waxed even more lyrical than usual:

War has slain its thousands, but drink its tens of thousands. The victims of war are buried in honoured graves, and their names are recorded in gilded letters on our Rolls of Honour. The victims of drink fill our prisons, our lunatic asylums, our hospitals, our old age asylums, our workhouses, and our gutters, their names are recorded in black in our Court charge sheets, and they drag down their wives and children with them (*Parish Gazette*, April 1916).

At the 1916 referendum the people of NSW gave 6 o'clock closing an overwhelming endorsement. The figures were:

6 p.m.	347,000	9 p.m.	179,000
7 p.m.	5,000	10 p.m.	1,000
8 p.m.	21,000	11 p.m.	3,000

The state figures were reflected in Illawarra. Between Helensburgh and Wollongong, 6 o'clock closing won by 1,418 votes over 9 o'clock closing, and between Figtree and Jamberoo early closing won by 2,172 votes (*SCT*, 16 June 1916). In 1918, R.B.S. Hammond, 'one of the ablest and most eloquent temperance advocates this country has had', delivered an address in Wollongong entitled 'Taking the War Seriously'. He argued that the Americans and Canadians were serious in the prosecution of the war as indicated by their intention of prohibiting the liquor traffic. Maybe if the war had continued much longer the prohibition movement would have taken deeper root in Australian soil.

Dancing was also condemned by the clergy. 'Was it right', asked W.E. Godson, rector of Dapto, 'for the girls to go to dances and have the arms of men around them - men who should be fighting at the front - while their brothers, fathers and sweethearts were perhaps lying in agony or dying at the front?' (*SCT*, 3 May 1918). Charles Stubbin, rector of Wollongong, spoke out against picture shows: they were 'rapidly destroying our national, domestic, and religious life' and 'lowering the moral tone of our people to a degree which is hardly conceivable' (*IM*, 3 March 1916). Robert Cordner, Presbyterian minister of Albion Park from 1911 to 1919, fired a broadside at gambling, reporting the sentiment of a friend who wanted 'to fly over the great crowds at Randwick racecourse and drop bombs on them to wake them up' (*SCT*, 3 May 1918). The war provoked the clergy into militant wowserism.

Recruitment

Illawarra clergy were enthusiastic supporters of voluntary recruitment. Volunteers would be fighting 'for God and humanity in the cause of righteousness and truth' proclaimed Stubbin to his Sunday morning congregation (*IM*, 6 July 1915). Among the members of the Wollongong Recruiting Committee were the Revs D. McKay Barnett (Presbyterian), E.W. Weymouth (Congregational), and Frank Dewsbury (Methodist). Occasionally those who stayed behind were castigated from the pulpit as 'cowards and shirkers', 'shirkers or wasters', or like the 'thousands of larrikins in Sydney - they crowd the Stadium and the Racecourses and such like places'.

Australian larrikins have never taken pulpit lashings lying

down. 'The clergy delighted in the war', said representatives of the 'so-called labor classes', and 'gloried in urging men to go forth to slay their fellow-men, while at the same time they sheltered in their homes and pulpits' (*SCT*, 3 May 1918). Such accusations put clergymen on the defensive. 'I would love to go', declared Godson of Dapto, who at 53 was ineligible to apply for a chaplaincy, 'to cheer the men, to urge them on, and, if necessary to die with them'. Searth Fleming, Methodist minister, found it necessary, when welcomed to Illawarra at Marshall Mount Methodist church, to explain why he was not at the front. He was rejected because of eye trouble. 'Should ever the chance come they could bet their bottom dollar he would be there, for if there was one thing he looked up to and took his hat off to it was a soldier. He believed that our cause was right, and God was with us; that we would win in the end, no matter how far off that might be, and even though it took the last drop of blood and the last coin our grand old Empire would struggle on to victory' (*SCT*, 10 August 1917).

As table VI shows, Godson, in his defensiveness, rather exaggerated when he declared that 'thousands of clergymen were serving as chaplains, while hundreds more had lain down their lives on the field of battle'.

TABLE VI

CLERICAL ENLISTMENT IN WORLD WAR I (AUSTRALIA)

	Chaplains	Ranks
Church of England	175	51
Catholic	86	1
Presbyterian	70	6
Methodist	54	80
Other Protestant		
Denominations (O.P.D.s)	27	n.a.

(Source, McKernan, *Australian Churches at War*, pp.41, 95, 97)

The number enlisting in the ranks suggests the frustration experienced by many of the clergy because applications for chaplain-

cies greatly exceeded the number of positions. Only Catholic chaplaincies remained unfilled for any length of time, for Catholic bishops, even more than Protestants, put the maintenance of parish life ahead of the needs of the forces. Among Illawarra clergy who enlisted were the Congregational minister, C.S. Oliver, and the Anglican minister of Austinmer, O.G. Dent, of whom the townspeople were said to be 'justly proud' (*IM*, 7 September 1917).

Conscription

No issue so divided the Australian public as the referenda of 1916 and 1917 on conscription. The Protestant clergy throughout Australia, typified by the Methodist who declared that Jesus would have voted 'yes', have been seen as ardent supporters of conscription (McKernan, *op cit*, ch.8). In Illawarra, however, their silence on the matter, by contrast with their strident support for early closing, was deafening. Admittedly, the Presbyterian minister of Corrimal, J.H. Beynon, bravely and unsuccessfully moved at an anti-conscription rally at Woonona an amendment to support any measure taken by the Government to terminate the war successfully (*IM*, 15 August 1916), and at Albion Park, the Presbyterian minister, Robert Cordner, said that Canada had adopted conscription, and he could not see why Australia should be behind other parts of the Empire (*SCT*, 3 May 1918).

The Anglican clergymen, Stubbin and Dowe, mentioned conscription during 1915, but as a threat rather than a desirable measure: '... we do not envy the feelings of a young man who is compelled to go' (*IM*, 6 July 1915). Concerned above all for the spiritual and moral regeneration of the nation, Illawarra clergy thought of enlistment as a matter of conscience and a test of character and faith, desirable features of a voluntary system, eliminated by conscription.

In considering the strange and atypical silence of Illawarra clergy on conscription, it should also be remembered that conscription was contrary to Labor Party policy, and Illawarra was strongly Labor. Perhaps clergy were reluctant to express views which they knew would be unpopular, just as, in moving from Sydney to Wollongong, they quickly learned to restrain any tendency to support the bosses in strikes. Protestant clergy in Illawarra have been like Catholic clergy in the whole of Australia: they have tended to

develop sympathies with working-class attitudes.

The war and prayer

Services of intercession and prayer meetings for soldiers were a major component of church life during the war. Anglican churches incorporated a war litany into the normal Sunday Evening Prayer service. At St. Michael's, Wollongong, for example, two services were held weekly for intercession and a prayer meeting was held on Thursday night after evensong. The services were maintained throughout the war and were normally well attended.

Lists of men at the front were attached to church doors. Church bells were rung every day at noon to remind people, as the rector of Wollongong said,

to pray for the speedy termination of the war and success of the allies, whilst those that do not pray, at least can think for a few minutes of the war and those fighting for their country (*Id.*, 6 July 1915).

The clergy and the bereaved

At the beginning of the war, the government asked the clergy to accept the responsibility of delivering telegrams from the Defence Department informing next of kin of death at the front. Church leaders readily accepted, but clergy soon regretted the decision. People came to dread the sight of a clergyman, who could visit no-one 'without frightening the relatives into a week's nervous sickness'. Along with many other ministers, the rector of Bulli informed his parishioners that he would no longer convey bad news from the front.

All this is because so many of our people are terrified when they see the minister come to their houses, even when he comes on ordinary business, or to make enquiries. It is not fair either to the minister or to the parishioners. If, then, the sad task of conveying bad news is ever imposed upon your Minister you may rest assured that he will not call at your house as on an ordinary visit, but he will send the bad news by letter, by special messenger or by post, and will follow in person as soon as possible; and you need not be frightened every time you see him coming to your door (*Parish Gazette*, November 1917).

Memorial services for those who died on active service also placed great stress on clergy. St. Luke's Anglican Church Dapto was crowded for the first memorial service of Private Alfred Neaves in October 1915. This was quickly followed by another for Private J. Muir: 'the church was beautifully draped, and the flags of the Allies were hung in conspicuous places. Over the pulpit the words "Be at Rest" were worked in white flowers on a black background' (*JM*, 24 December 1915).

A year later, as the casualties mounted, the rector of Wollongong, resolved to lessen the frequency of memorial services:

... it is our desire to do the utmost honour to all our fallen soldiers, and lest memorial services should become common and lose their value we propose to hold a general memorial service in each centre after the war, and at the same time unveil a permanent roll of honour in the church with every fallen soldier's name inscribed who belonged to our church (*Wollongong Parish Paper*, October 1916).

At a memorial service for Sergeant H.O. Davies of Dapto, the Presbyterian church was too small and the Agricultural hall had to be used. The Rev. Cordiner 'spoke of the exemplary conduct and clean living of the departed hero, mentioning the fact that letters from his comrades in the firing line intimated that they had never heard a vulgar expression from his lips. He trusted that all young men would endeavour to emulate this young hero's example' (*SCT*, 10 August 1917).

Anzac Day services have been held in Illawarra since the first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. The Protestant Ministers Association arranged for services to be held in schools and the Town Hall. 'It had been a saying that new countries had no history', said the Methodist minister, Frank Dewsbury in 1917. 'Anzac Day would alter that saying for us. There had been illustrious history made for us, and inspiring traditions'. Catholics absented themselves from these united services, but special masses were said for the fallen. At the Anzac Day mass at St. Francis Xavier's in 1917, Father Dunne praised the valour of the Australian soldiers and expressed the hope that the war would soon end in a victorious peace (*SCT*, 27 April 1917).

As early as 1916 the churches began to erect honour rolls to



Anzac Day Parade, Wollongong, 1917.

the memory of the fallen in the 'Great War' as it was already called. At the unveiling of a roll of honour at Scarborough Railway station, the gathering was addressed by both the Anglican minister, O.G. Dent, and the Catholic priest, Father O'Connor.

Peace

The longed-for armistice was signed on 11 November 1918. Every available church bell in Illawarra rang. The bell hanging in the spire of the Methodist church at Bulli was rung so fiercely that the bell-rope broke and was not replaced. Crowds flocked to the churches for thanksgiving services. In the small village of Clifton, 45 worshipped in Emmanuel church, an increase of 30 on the previous week. After all these services 'the tin can bands' got to work 'and the din was enough to deafen one'. Wollongong showground was crowded for the official peace celebrations. D. McKay Barnett, the Presbyterian minister, informed the vast throng that 'we are here to celebrate the greatest victory that had been achieved in the history of the world. It has been a victory of personality - the personality of the leaders and behind all the personality of God'. After all the Protestant clergy had spoken, Father Dunne addressed the crowd. He spoke

of the devastation wrought by the Germans, but said 'I am here to rejoice with you'. He was not there, however, for the 'United Churches Victory Thanksgiving Service' which followed the civil celebrations. He said he had conducted special Mass that morning, 'thanking God for peace and for the glorious victory ... he had done his part and would not take part in the service that afternoon' (*IM*, 15 November 1918).

The rector of Wollongong said that the victory was evidence that 'God had set his seal on the side of righteousness and truth. It was for us as a people and as individuals to establish righteousness and justice in our land'. (*IM*, 15 November 1918). The war had not convinced the people to turn to God, as the clergy had hoped, but, in giving victory, the clergy believed that God had made it possible to repent in peace, rather than under the fear of judgment. (This section on World War I is based mainly on S. Westwood, *A Study of the Attitudes and Activities of the Church of England in the Illawarra during the First World War*, B.A. (hons) thesis, University of Wollongong, 1980).

6. THE SPANISH INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

Australians were only given a brief reprieve from the fear of judgment. A world convalescing from war was ravaged by a yet more deadly scourge. The influenza epidemic of 1918/19 took between 20 and 30 million lives. In Australia, where the death rate was lower than for most of the rest of the world, about 12,000 died. 'Spanish' influenza was so-called, not because it originated in Spain, but because the King of Spain was an early victim.

The NSW government imposed extreme but ever-changing regulations to contain the problem, including quarantine precautions and inoculation campaigns. Michael Kelly, Archbishop of Sydney, was among the prominent citizens to submit to the much-publicised injections, but the refusal to allow Catholic priests to attend the sick and dying at the Sydney quarantine station provoked protests from Catholics all over the state. Archbishop Kelly was turned away when he stood outside the quarantine station demanding admittance. Catholics interpreted the government's stand as a sectarian move to deprive Catholics of their sacramental rites. One of the best attended gatherings of Catholics to meet in Wollongong for years

protested against the action. Father Dunne said that there had been no more blatant discrimination against Catholics since the days of the pioneering priest, Father Therry. A copy of the protest was sent to the acting Prime Minister (SCT, 13 December 1918). Ironically, Father Dunne caught typhoid on his return journey from Ireland after a holiday and died at the quarantine station on 2 March 1924.



Father Dunne's Funeral, Wollongong, 5 March, 1924.

Early in 1919, as influenza victims multiplied throughout NSW, bureaucracy went berserk, - an official call for united prayer coinciding with an order for churches to close. Clergy waxed indignant when hotel bars were not closed simultaneously, and won another battle against the brewing lobby. Gauze masks had to be worn. Religious services, after one Sunday in the open air, were permitted again, providing the clergyman stood more than six feet from his congregation, the members of which had to be masked and seated at least three feet away from each other. A 'Day of Humiliation and Prayer' on account of the epidemic was held on 22 February 1919.

The rector of Wollongong deplored alike the selfishness of people who congregated at cinemas and racecourses and the lack of faith of those who did not congregate at church. Richard Howard, curate at St. Michael's fell ill hours after taking a service at Mt. Kembla on 23 March 1919 and died in a makeshift hospital at Port



Canon Goodhew and the Howard Memorial angel lectern.

Kumbia three days later. The angel lectern at St. Michael's was given in his memory. The epidemic almost made a clean sweep of the priests at St. Francis Xavier who, though overworked, never refused to visit the sick. Father Mahoney, a young man 'strong and healthy' succumbed to the disease in August 1919. He was buried beside the church as was the custom when priests died in the parish. Father Dunne was unable to officiate at his funeral as he himself was very ill with influenza. That left Father Byrne: eventually he was sent to Lewisham Hospital suffering from a nervous breakdown caused by overwork.

The pestilence, following war, encouraged the millennial enthusiasts to intensify their speculation on Christ's Second Coming: the four horsemen of the Apocalypse were at large in Australia; the 'fourth seal' was being opened to reveal a pale horse with Death as its rider and Hell in its train. The Great War followed by the pandemic had created in Australia a 'situation where negative thought and destructive criticism could flourish'. The next generation would not be an easy one for the churches.

(On the epidemic, see H. McQueen, 'The Spanish Influenza Pandemic in Australia, 1918-19', *Journal of History for Senior Students*, 6.4, 1975, pp.85-107; J. Greenwich, 'The Pneumonic Influenza Epidemic of 1919...' *Student Research Papers in Australian History*, No.5, University of Newcastle, 1980, pp.13-21).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ADVENT OF BHP AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

(1920 – 1938)

TABLE OF EVENTS

1920 – 1938

1920

Australian Fertilizers commenced production at Port Kembla.

Conventional District of Kembla (C of E) formed (Pt. Kembla Mt. Kembla, Figtree). Balgownie and Fairy Meadow added to Corrimal Parish (C of E).

1921

Bush Church Aid Society formed.

January - Wollongong C of E Girls Hostel opened.

21 November - Corrimal made a Mission District with Fairy Meadow and Balgownie (C of E).

St Molus RC Church Thirroul built in brick.

1922

New St. Paul's Scarborough (C of E) opened

7 January - Methodist Church Austinmer opened.

1923

Thirroul RC Parish created.

August - Salvation Army Tent campaign - 36 souls saved.

15 December - Salvation Army Citadel Wollongong opened.

1924

10 February - New Bulli RC Convent school opened.

13 April - Presbyterian church, Port Kembla opened.

1925

NSW Council of Churches formed.

13 June - Opening of second St. Stephen's C of E Port Kembla

November - Corrimal C of E made a full parish - included Fairy Meadow and Balgownie.

Helensburgh RC Parish created

October - Salvation Army campaign - 45 saved.

1926

Work commenced on construction of Hoskins Steelworks Port Kembla

South Coast Festival (C of E) inaugurated

18 December - St. Paul's C of E Woonona opened.

Christian Brothers College opened in Wollongong.

Balgownie Presbyterian Church separated from Wollongong and became a Home Mission Station.

Corrimal Methodist Circuit separated from Wollongong.

1927

Bellambi Mines Rescue Station opened.

1928

Catholic International Eucharistic Congress held in Sydney.

AI&S produces first pig iron.

10 March - New St. Paul's C of E Fairy Meadow opened.

April - Kembla Conventual District made a Parish (C of E).

Albion Park Rail Methodist Church and United Sunday school opened.

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1929

Great depression begins.

1930

23 February - New Convent opened, Harbour Street, Wollongong.

Wollongong Methodist Church extended - opened 30 August.

1931

2WL commenced transmission.

1932

29 January - Soldiers and Miners Memorial Church Mt. Kembla opened (C of E).

24 April - Wollongong Baptist Church constituted.

Second Methodist Church, Port Kembla, opened.

1933

August - Port Kembla to Moss Vale Railway opened.

Howard Mowll appointed Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

12 February - Second extensions to St. Francis Xavier's opened.

28 January - Methodist Hall opened at West Wollongong.

1934

8 August - St. George's C of E Gerringong consecrated.

29 August - New brick Presbyterian Church, Berry, opened.

November - 50th Anniversary of Keiraville Congregational Sunday school.

1935

Hoskins taken over by BHP

6 May - Protestants hold united service to celebrate Silver Jubilee of the accession of King George V.

1936

Lysaghts commenced at Port Kembla.

13-week strike at Steelworks.

6 and 7 June - Salvation Army Jubilee Celebrations.

1937

8 August - Berkeley Mission Hall (C of E) opened.

Port Kembla RC Parish created.

Corrimal-Balgownie Presbyterian charge commenced.

7 August - Wollongong Baptist Church opened

July - Salvation Army Sunday school opened at Port Kembla.

Church of Jesus Christ Scientist opened in Market St. Wollongong.

1938

Coal Strike.

Provisional District of West Wollongong (C of E) created.

St. Stephen's C of E Port Kembla consecrated.

19 February - New St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wollongong, opened.

Dapto-Albion Park became a separate Methodist Circuit

6 August - Nowra Baptist Church opened.

The 1920s and 30s have been labelled a 'sterile, non-creative era' for NSW churches. As with political and civic leaders, but with less excuse, religious leaders lacked inspiration. J.C. Wright, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, was 'more of the diplomat than the leader', while the Catholic Archbishop Michael Kelly 'was a man of extraordinary piety but ... of no great ability'. The idealism of most Australians had been killed in the war, and its orphan-child, public-spiritedness, died for want of nurture in the ensuing materialistic age: making money in the first decade and surviving in the second.

The clergy continued to scold the population for sliding still further into paganism, and challenged the laity with the necessity of doing more than any of their predecessors for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. The laity (churchgoing and non-churchgoing) preferred the view that Australians were practical, if not practising Christians, and that evangelism was the task of the clergy as it had always been.

Clerical pressures on the laity caused a twin response: the proportion of nominal Christians attending church declined slightly, while all the denominations (except Presbyterianism, racked by theological controversies) persuaded an increasing percentage of their adherents to become communicant members. Churchgoing seems to have become more a matter of conviction and less a matter of custom.

More dramatically, there was a change in church amenities in the 1920s. Motor cars replaced bicycles and horses for parish visitation, electricity replaced gas for church lighting, and carpets adorned first the sanctuary and then the nave (see D.E. Hansen, *The Churches and Society in New South Wales: 1919-1939*, Ph.D. Macquarie University, 1978).

No change, however, is discernible in the attitudes of clergy to ethical issues. Evangelicals continued to campaign against drinking, gambling and Sabbath-breaking. They failed to persuade a majority of their fellow-citizens to vote for prohibition in the 1928 referendum, and they failed to convince the government of the evils of State lotteries. For their part, Catholic priests continued to condemn mixed marriages, divorce and birth-control. The churches failed to speak with one voice on ethical issues. Not even Protestant

churches in the NSW Council of Churches, formed in 1925, could agree. Perhaps because of division, rather than irrelevance, the churches were 'becoming more a voice crying in the wilderness'.

The period may not have been one of 'high religious drama' for the State as a whole, but Illawarra was arguably the most problem-ridden part of the State, and in local congregations, as we shall see, many low and not very religious dramas were played out, while occasionally, as Wesley would have said, the pure celestial fire kindled the sacred love on the mean altar of the human heart.

1. NEITHER NEW BIRMINGHAM NOR NEW JERUSALEM

The decade of the 1920s was not as prosperous for Illawarra as for other parts of Australia. The transfer from Lithgow to Port Kembla of G. & C. Hoskins Steelmaking works raised hopes of 'a new Birmingham' on the South Coast. Between 1921 and 1933, 5,000 men came to Illawarra in search of work, most of them unskilled and unattached. Port Kembla, inadequately planned and unprepared for the invasion, was said to be 'crippled at birth'. The acute housing shortage of the 1920s degenerated into the appalling living conditions of the shanty towns of the depression years. Part of



Depression housing, Port Kembla.

the problem was that, no sooner had Hoskins established a new company, Australian Iron and Steel, and commenced operations in 1928, than world steel prices slumped. Copper prices also collapsed and ER&S was not working by 1928.



Australian Iron and Steel, Pty. Ltd., 1927.

The coal industry was chronically depressed throughout the 1920s as pre-war export orders were never regained. A Royal Commission on the Coal Industry in 1929 concluded that, because of over-production, the Illawarra coal industry was employing 1,374 more miners than needed. Hence, while the population of the town of Wollongong increased 69% in the period 1921-33, the mining communities' population remained static. With the industrial downturn of the depression years the demand for coal continued to fall. Further south, the four Kiama blue metal gravel quarries were mechanised in the 1920s, reducing the numbers employed by three-quarters from a peak of almost 500. During the depression two of the four quarries closed altogether.

With high unemployment, Trade Unions were largely powerless: the Illawarra Trades and Labor Council ceased to exist during the depression and, at the local level, the mining lodges met infrequently. The disequilibrium of the sexes, created by the invasion of men in

search of work recalled Illawarra's early history, and the inadequate housing conditions constituted challenges for the churches in the 1920s. With the onset of the depression, however, the churches could do little more than survive and encourage a modicum of self-help.

Industrialisation and the churches: St. Stephen's Church of England, Port Kembla

Industrial development at Port Kembla was reflected in a number of interesting ways in the life of the Church of England. Anglican work was really commenced at Port Kembla through the enthusiasm of Mrs. P.J.N. Rieck, Sunday school teacher and wife of the Port Kembla Harbour Master. Another pioneer of St. Stephen's was Mr. Downie, the pilot who brought vessels into the port. The need for managerial staff at the works brought people of higher social standing to Port Kembla. One such was H.R. Lee, ER&S accountant, a descendent of whom has provided this glimpse of life at St. Stephen's:

ER&S staff sat in pews at St. Stephen's separated from the rest of the congregation. The Lee family especially insisted on this division and reinforced it with determination. ... ER&S staff who employed servants also required them to attend church and prayer meetings (G. Mitchell, *Company, Community and Governmental Attitudes ...*, University of Wollongong Ph.D. thesis 1982, p.108).

In 1920 Port Kembla was separated from the Parish of Wollongong, and in that year Mrs. H.R. Lee was appointed first secretary of the St. Stephen's Women's Guild. During the inquiry which led to the creation of the Conventional District of Kembla it was debated whether Figtree or Port Kembla should be the mother church. Figtree was in the geographic centre of the district with Mt. Kembla to the west and Port Kembla to the east. Figtree also boasted a handsome brick church, opened in 1911, a school hall and a cottage which could have been used as a rectory. St. Stephen's, Port Kembla, was a humble weatherboard structure (the corrugated iron walls had been replaced by timber in 1916) and there was no house for a rectory. It was argued correctly, however, that growth would be much greater in the new industrial centre than in the old farming centre of Figtree.

The Anglican church's dependence on the traditional rural

classes and the new industrial middle classes was symbolised nicely at Port Kembla on 6 December 1924. Two foundation stones were laid for a new Anglican church, one by a descendant of D'Arcy Wentworth who had owned 13,000 acres in the district and whose estate granted land to the church, the other by Rieck and Downie using ornamental trowels made for the purpose by people's wardens H.E. Day and E.F. Lepastrier, at the ER&S works.

On 19 July 1925, just a month after the opening of the new church, a memorial service was held for Mr. H.P. Greenwood, Assistant Manager of Metal Manufacturers. A font to his memory was consecrated on 31 October 1925 at the same time as the consecration of the church. The brass ewer for use with the font was sent from England by Greenwood's relatives in 1928. Greenwood was not a practising member of St. Stephen's, but the value of the interdependence of church and industry was rarely questioned by either party.

Friction and Fellowship in Mining Churches in the 1920s

In 1925, as Charles Hoskins contemplated transferring his steel-making works from Lithgow to Port Kembla, a debate between churchmen and members of the Ironworkers Union provoked the following observation from the Union Secretary

... the working man did not see where the Church helped him in his struggle for existence. He understood the ethics of Christianity, and these were sound, but they had little place in capitalism today ... The worker today found that an employer who was a Christian was no better than a capitalist who did not profess to be a Christian (SMW, 23 October 1925).

His point was well illustrated at Mt. Kembla earlier that year when the mine manager, James Jarvie, took 42 men to court for 'aiding and abetting a strike', and secured 14 days imprisonment for each. Jarvie, an outstanding surveyor, was Mt. Kembla manager from 1911 until his death in 1929. He had a reputation for being tough but fair on the miners, was a great supporter of the boy scouts and girl guides, and was reputedly the finest mind on the Central Illawarra Council. It was said of him that 'he loved his church'. He not only loved the little Anglican church at Mt. Kembla, but he ruled it. He was auditor, he offered to teach Sunday school, he saw to it that the annual picnic was for all residents regardless of religious affiliat-

ion, and he lent the Company train for transport. In 1923 he moved in church committee that a new brick church be erected on Company land, as the Presbyterians and Methodists had done. His offer to supervise construction of the church was accepted, as was his recommendation that it should be called St. Andrew's since one Andrew Wilson offered to donate 50 pounds towards the project.

Then Jarvie fell out with the committee, almost certainly over the 1925 strike which lasted for six months and created great bitterness. The move to build a new church petered out after the company refused to give title deeds for the proposed site to the church. Jarvie moved to St. Michael's, Wollongong, where at the time of his death, he was a Parish Councillor. His funeral, conducted 'under the stress of great emotion' by the rector, Pat Walker, was the largest the district had seen for years.

Perhaps there were those who had attached themselves to Mt. Kembla Church of England primarily because Jarvie was there. After his departure the nominal strength of the church never again seems to have been so great. In 1930, however, a Company employee and lodge secretary, Fred Kirkwood, was elected church secretary. He has held the position ever since and headed the movement to build a new church opened on 29 January 1932. Against the wishes of his rector, he successfully had the church named 'The Soldiers and Miners Memorial Church' since many Mt. Kembla residents lost relatives in the 1902 mine disaster and in the war.

Industrial warfare did not always create friction in church life. At Corrimal, raised to a full Anglican parish in November 1925 and including the churches of St. Alban's, Corrimal, St. Paul's, Fairy Meadow, and St. Aidan's, Balgownie, the Rev. Arthur Setchell found great joy and fulfilment in his ministry, surrounded by a 'spendidly responsive people'. It was not only that they built him a rectory and gave him a Chevrolet car, but they did it all with such a good spirit! During the six weeks' coal strike of March-April 1926 gangs of willing miners laid the foundations of the rectory, making reinforcements of steel cables, old rails, and even an anchor. Inspired by the Great Architect of the universe, the workers gave such a demonstration of faith and works in harmony that James, the Lord's brother, would have been thrilled, and it was quite unthinkable that any cracks could ever appear in such a building. Then the happy band

built a new church, St. Paul's, Fairy Meadow, opened in 1928, 'one of the most chastely beautiful little brick churches to be found anywhere'. It was during church services, however, that joy exceeding all that Setchell had experienced previously was felt. 'That is not to be wondered at', he wrote, waxing mystical, 'for our capacity for such enjoyment has become greater, and requires a greater satisfaction.'



St. Paul's Anglican Church, Fairy Meadow.

Low Drama

At Kima the cause of the Salvation Army languished, and its hall was put up for auction in 1928. Paddy Murphy felt safer without the Salvos. Once, while listening to the Salvation Army band and puffing away at his pipe, the corps Captain, who was conducting the band, stepped backwards into Paddy, ramming his pipe down his throat. After extricating the pipe, Paddy roared his protest. The captain replied, 'My good man, if Jesus had meant you to smoke he would have put a chimney in your head'. 'Me good man', snarled

Paddy, 'if Jesus had mesnt you to walk backwards he would have put eyes in yer arse'.

At Albion Park, Bill Webster, gravedigger and vergar of the Church of England, cantankerous and sharp of tongue, terrorised the kids and abused adults. At the funeral of one local identity, after filling in the grave and neatly rounding off the top whilst mourners and friends looked on, old Bill gave the mound a final hearty smack with the shovel, glared at the assembly with an eye like a mad gander, and hissed 'And that was one old bugger I never liked'.

The New Woman

During the 20s and 30s women won greater social freedom, going out at night unescorted, drinking in wine bars, and smoking cigarettes in public. The churches considered this a Pyrrhic victory and emphasised traditional values. Dapto parishioners were told that at the 1923 annual meeting of the Mothers Union in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, the Bishop of Goulburn spoke of the 'new womanhood'. Girls now earning large wages were tempted to 'precocious and perilous pleasures'. 'A new psychology' added the bishop perceptively, 'revealed new problems in the most rational of children'. The spiritual purpose and character of the Mothers Union, he concluded, were more needed than ever. It should not be used merely as an instrument of parochial finance. Its object was to protect the foundation of home life and the sanctity of marriage. Kiama parishioners were informed in 1938 that:

Whatever she may do later, no woman has a right to put nicotine or any other poison in her blood until she has finished her work, the creation of the next generation. After childbearing is done, ladies, if they choose, may smoke, chew or take snuff - but they ought not. Their job then is setting a good example.

While acknowledging that they had 'undervalued and neglected the gifts of women', the major denominations barely took seriously the question of formal ordination, contenting themselves with such reaffirmations as 'it is still the hand that rocks the cradle, rather than the hand that thumps the pulpit, that rules the world'. In the Salvation Army, the idea of the equality of women in God's work has been more readily accepted owing to the example of its co-founder, Catherine Booth. In 1924, two women assumed leadership of the

Wollongong Corps. It was reported that it took 'a long time for the men to accept petticoat government', but they eventually did and women have been solely in charge of the Corps on several occasions since.

A characteristic of Illawarra Christianity is that most denominations are organised into central and branch churches. Central churches tended to draw the more prominent of the region's citizens, erected handsome edifices, were male dominated, and headed by the resident clergyman. Branch churches attracted people of humbler social origin, were content with less pretentious buildings, gave greater scope for lay assistance, and were largely dependent on and sometimes dominated by women's groups. Woman power was given extra momentum by World War II when women replaced men on church committees. All Saints Anglican Church, Figtree, a branch church until 1952, is a good example. In 1936 four members of its committee were women. By 1937 one, Florence Chapman, was treasurer and people's warden. In 1940, eight women and one man were appointed to the committee. 1941: 9 women elected. 1942: 10 women. The war ended but the female ascendancy continued. 1946: 13 women. 1951: 15 women. It was well known that Figtree church was really run by the Women's Guild. The appointment on 23 June 1952 of the Rev. Kenneth Campbell as curate-in-charge of the Provisional District of West Kembla, centring on Figtree, was a coup, spelling the end of woman power.

It should be said that there then appears to have been little awareness of conflict of interest between the sexes. Women were rarely interested in female ordination, filled gaps left by males on committees, deferred to any males who happened to be on committees, stepped aside whenever, as after World War II, men were available, and returned uncomplainingly to their fund-raising meetings opened with Bible reading, prayer, or, as in the case of the Wollongong Presbyterian Ladies Guild, a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson.

2. THE DEPRESSION YEARS

NSW Churches were stretched during the depression merely to survive, let alone give much practical help to the unemployed and poor. The financial plight of the churches resulted from a fall in giving:

TABLE VII

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERS
TO THEIR CHURCHES IN NSW

	1928	1932
	pounds	pounds
Church of England	3.78	2.17
Presbyterian	5.97	4.36
Methodist	3.07	2.69
Baptist	5.14	3.60

(Source, Hansen, *op.cit.*)

That Illawarra churches were even more stretched than most is suggested by an article referring to the special difficulties of mining communities in the *Congregationalist* for 10 August 1930:

All kinds of appeals for financial assistance pour in whilst most of our churches have all they can do to make both ends meet. The London Missionary Society's income has dropped several hundreds of pounds, the Home Mission Board needs increased funds, the Centenary Movement is not receiving the support anticipated; the churches on the coal fields still ask for aid to meet their obligations. And the income of practically every member of our church has been cut.

At St. Alban's Corrimal, in the heart of the Southern Coalfield, the offertory plate was sometimes sent round twice, a very unprotestant thing to do. The Parish Council repeatedly discussed cutting the rector's salary. When the mine began to work more than one day in the week and someone moved that the rector's stipend be increased, the rector said, 'If anyone has had a rise in the past twelve months, then I'll accept an increase in stipend'. The councillors did not push him, but contented themselves with a protest to the Prime Minister over increased salaries for M.P.'s. At St. Michael's Wollongong, the Parish Council shelved their rector's plans for expansion, and debated stopping printing the parish paper or selling the rector's car, resolving on the latter.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Session, Wollongong, reported that it had no funds to contribute to the national Presbyterian

Cathedral. At St. Francis Xavier's, Father Doherty was told that many parishioners could not pay their children's school fees, and when extensions to the church were opened on 12 February 1933, creating a debt of 7,500 pounds, he commented that he would make no appeal, and that those 'who were out of work or hard up were not to give anything'. Rather than multiply such examples of hardship, let us look at one case more closely.

The Catholic cause at Helensburgh

The Catholic church of the Holy Cross, Helensburgh, had been opened in 1891, and a Catholic school, shortly to be run by the Sisters of St. Joseph, was opened in 1896. In 1911 Helensburgh with Clifton was made into a separate parish which developed strongly during the early war years when the demand for coal was high. Parish returns for 1916 showed that the Catholic population was 560. Catholic schools at Helensburgh and Clifton had 80 and 75 pupils respectively on the rolls, while the Catholic Sunday schools enrolled 60 at Helensburgh and 56 at Clifton.

After the war, however, the coal industry was depressed for two decades and hence economic hardship was endemic to Helensburgh for that period. Parish finances were soon in dire straits, due, as parish priest, Richard Darby, explained to Archbishop Kelly in 1920, to the demands of the war years, the influenza epidemic, strikes and the permanent closure of a mine at Clifton. 'This is purely a mining centre', Darby informed his Archbishop, 'and in a strike of more than three weeks, universal distress is inevitable and there is no other class of people to fall back on'. Three years later the parish priest, now Father Howe, regretted that he was unable to contribute to St. Mary's Building Fund because of the continuation of the 'darg', that is set, limited work at the mine which meant parishioners could not support even their own church.

In 1925 the parish was withdrawn from secular (diocesan) priests and put in the hands of the Dominican Order under Father Oxenham. Archbishop Kelly was nervous of the religious orders who, unlike diocesan priests, were not subject to his control, so he located the Dominicans in the remote, isolated parish of Helensburgh. There they were reported to be 'great mates' with the Anglican and Presbyterian ministers and the Methodist lay preacher. Economic



Metropolitan Colliery, Helensburgh.

hardship made sectarian rivalry irrelevant, and all the clergy found Helensburgh a friendly village as long as they 'did not put on airs'. Only a local communist group was antagonistic to the clergy.

All the zeal and intellectual ability for which the Dominicans are celebrated, however, could not rescue the parish from the economic quagmire. In 1931, with 400 of the town's 500 miners out of work, and the sisters of St. Joseph, whose 70 pupils contributed a total of 12/6 fortnightly in fees, unable to meet their bills, Father N.F. Baldwin, appealed to the Archbishop for help. It would be 'sheer foolishness' to hold a bazaar, he explained, and no financial assistance was forthcoming from the Catholics hitherto employed on the Woronora Dam since building had stopped there: his monthly takings at Woronora were 4 shillings although 'it involves going over 100 miles by car in the month'. The Archbishop sent 100 pounds 'as an extraordinary subsidy which cannot be repeated'.

A year later Father Baldwin advised that the situation was 'very much worse'. Only 32 men were then employed at the mine and none on dam construction. By 1934 it was being rumoured that the Dominicans would be pulled out, and the parish 'worked from a distant parish'. One hundred and fifty-three parishioners petitioned

the Archbishop to send them a resident priest 'preferentially a secular one'. The Dominicans, however, were not withdrawn until 1948. Father Oxenham returned to the parish in 1935 after two years absence and was appalled by 'the dilapidated condition of the whole town'. (St. Mary's Archives, Helensburgh File). It took another world war to reverse the economic fortunes of Helensburgh. Today it is within Sydney's commuter belt, and no longer dependent solely on coal mining. In August 1984 the old weatherboard church built in 1891, was moved to a new site. Father Fullendorf, parish priest, hopes that a new brick church will be built in time for the centenary in 1991.

3. CHURCH RESPONSES TO THE DEPRESSION: RELIEF, RADICALISM AND REACTION

Troubled that the unemployed were endangered through malnutrition, the churches almost drowned them in soup. H. Tomlinson and Sydney Turner, successive rectors of Bulli, both ran soup kitchens in their parish. At Wollongong the Salvation Army opened a soup kitchen on 10 June 1930, and supplied 1,700 meals that winter. At Port Kembla, Ernest Millard, rector of St. Stephen's, or more truthfully, Mrs. Millard and the Ladies Guild, organised soup kitchens. The Kiama rector canvassed local farms for food and used the rectory as a distribution centre. Prior to Christmas 1933 the Government made a grant to the needy of vegetables, eggs, honey and cheese, distributing it through the churches. We read in St. Francis Xavier's church notices for 1933 that parishioners were not to feel embarrassed at receiving this aid. The churches held concerts to raise money and received gifts in kind for the children's food depot. The unemployed were sometimes put to work on church construction and renovation, receiving one week's pay for every two week's work. The Salvation Army and the St. Vincent de Paul Society distributed rations and clothing to the needy. It seems fair to conclude that while the voluntary relief activities of the churches were generous, they were haphazard and hopelessly inadequate in affording sustained relief to the suffering.

W.A. (Billy) Davies, Labor member for Illawarra in the Legislative Assembly, both praised the churches for their contribution to relief (he was a politician) and challenged them to do more (he was a socialist). Davies had been one of the few supporters of the

Industrial Christian Fellowship in the early 1920s, contributing an article entitled 'Demands for a Social Gospel' to the *Labor Daily* of 16 March, 1924, probably to please his fellow Welshman, A.C. Willis, whom we met in the previous chapter.

In June 1930 Davies addressed a packed meeting for the unemployed held at St. Michael's Wollongong, chaired by S.R. Musgrave, parish councillor and President of the Wollongong Relief Committee. Davies thanked churches and charitable organisations for their help to women and children, adding that 'the man who helps his fellows is a Christian man' (*SCT*, 5 June 1930). A few months later he spoke at the opening of extensions to the Wesley Church. He began by telling his audience what they wanted to hear, that religion has a vital place in, and powerful influence on, national life, and expressed appreciation for the practical service South Coast ministers were giving in the present distress. Perhaps heartened by the presence of Dr. S.J. Hoban, a Methodist clergyman who was doing a celebrated work in a Melbourne slum, Davies went further. The churches' involvement in the plight of the unemployed would make the working classes look on the churches with a different eye. More needed to be done, especially in the area of the distribution of income, and if the churches did that as well, they would have the working classes behind them (*BM*, 5 September 1930).

There was little chance that the churches would be the instrument to implement this plank of the Socialists' platform. They had a more traditional solution to offer. In 1931 the leaders of NSW Protestantism, including J.C. Wright, Anglican Archbishop, and C.A. White, one-time Wollongong minister and now Moderator of the Presbyterian Churches, issued a manifesto:

The present grave national crisis through which Australia is passing... is an economic... (but) even more a moral crisis, and... there must be a return to God involving a more general and open acknowledgement of Him as Supreme Lord and Governor... Urgent as it is to relieve immediate distress, it is our conviction that we must face the moral and spiritual issues involved in this present crisis. It is the outcome of a way of life which has exalted material interests above moral and spiritual ideals (*Methodist*, 25 April, 1931).

If this traditional moderation appears to be uninspired, and if it is thought regrettable that there were not more church people

ready to take up Davies' left-wing challenge, it should be acknowledged that at least the moderation kept the bulk of Christians clear of the clutches of the extreme Right. Two prominent St. Michael's parishioners, however, had no taste for moderation. In 1931 Drs. Harry Lee and N.E. Kirkwood (a synodaman) both sought, and the latter won, the position of foundation president of the New Guard, a paramilitary organisation, designed to stamp out Communism. Harry Lee, a fighter whether at church vestry meetings or in the Council Chambers (he was an alderman), even exchanged punches with Communists, and was alleged to have lined his gloves with lead. Kirkwood, though he shared the same medical practice, was more experimental in his thinking on social issues and in 1935 joined the Labor Party.

4. MISSIONS – THE CATHOLICS

During the 1920s and 30s the percentage of Catholics in the NSW population actually declined. Yet membership increased strongly. Among the factors accounting for Catholic strength were the school system which helped contain wastage from the church, the unapologetic teaching of the church's dogmas, and the success of Catholic missions.

Cardinal Moran had introduced the practice of regular missions, every second year in city parishes and triennially in country parishes. Sometimes held by Jesuits, but far more frequently by the Redemptorists, the purpose of the missions, was to challenge the indifferent and reclaim those who had fallen away. Catholics were more accepting of the fact that missions are usually more successful at deepening the commitment of the faithful and restoring them to the correct practices of the church than winning the total outsider. This is evident from the way results of missions were reported to Archbishop Kelly. The number of confessions heard throughout the course of the mission, and the number who took communion at Mass, were normally reported. At a mission held by the Redemptorist Fathers in the Parish of Wollongong in 1933, 1,516 confessions of adults were heard at Wollongong, 313 at Port Kembla, 181 at Balgownie and 91 at Mt. Kembla. The results of two missions held at Thirroul in this period are recorded in table VIII.

TABLE VIII

MISSIONS: CATHOLIC PARISH OF THIRROUL 1928, 1936

		St. Molua Thirroul	St. Brigid Coledale	St. Patrick Clifton
Confessions:	1928	286	70	82
	1936	305	58	46
Communions:	1928	675	110	130
	1936	700	86	54

The 1928 Mission at Thirroul was taken by Father P.J. Moloney, missionary of the Sacred Heart, and he understandably emphasised the devotional benefits of the Sacred Heart Sodality. At Thirroul 168 joined the Sodality and at Coledale 48 joined. It was also reported that a marriage, hitherto invalid by church standards, was 'rectified'.

5. MISSIONS – THE BAPTISTS

The most successful Protestant missions in this period were denominational, rather than interdenominational as Vickery's tent mission had been. The Baptist Church, which put greatest faith in missions as an instrument of expansion, was the denomination which expanded most in the 1920s and 30s. Between 1926 and 1932 the NSW Baptist Union employed two highly successful evangelists, John G. Ridley and W.L. Jarvis. Largely through their numerous missions, the NSW Baptists lifted their membership from 6,703 to 10,193 an increase of over 50% in 6 years. In the year 1930/31 the number of baptisms exceeded 1,000 for the first time.

Aggressive evangelism was adopted as a denominational priority following repeated appeals from C.J. Tinsley who trained for the ministry at Spurgeon's College, London, and was for 30 years an evangelistic inferno at Stanmore Baptist Church in Sydney. A typical example of Tinsley's inflamed oratory was one such summons to evangelistic responsibility made at the 1927 Baptist Union, of which he was president:

I call you back to the old passion of your earlier ministry, as though it were my last message to you. I call you by the Greathearts of the church who are our examples. I call you by the cross of Calvary, red with its blood. I call you by the solemn witness of the awful drift around. I call you by the blessed hope of the speedy return of our Lord. By these things I call you, my brother workers, as I do myself, to a greater devotion, a deeper consecration and a more consuming passion for the glory of Christ, and increased prosperity to our denomination. (quoted in A.C. Prior, *Some fell on good ground: A History of the Baptist Church in New South Wales*, 1966, p.133).

The coming of the Baptist cause to Wollongong in the 1930s was a product of this evangelistic emphasis. We have already seen (chapter 2) that Baptist churches met briefly in Wollongong in the 1840s and Kiama in the 1860s. A Baptist Church Fellowship was formed at Woonona on 29 October 1905 following the baptism of two ladies and two clergymen at Bellambi before 1,000 intrigued onlookers. Woonona Baptist Church was opened on 2 August 1908, and from 1916 to 1921 Wollongong Baptists met under the auspices of the Woonona Church.

The vice-president of the Baptist Union and minister of the always crowded Baptist Church at Dulwich Hill, R. Goodman, visited Woonona in 1931 to conduct the church's anniversary services. On 6 March 1932 he returned to Wollongong where he conducted a service, and the Wollongong Baptist Church was formed on 24 April 1932 when eleven members were received into fellowship. During the next 12 months membership grew to 33, of whom 7 were transferred from Lithgow Baptist church as part of the migration to the Port Kembla steelworks from Lithgow during that period. Others were added by two missions held in 1932, the second led by John Ridley himself from 27 November to 12 December. The first annual report of the Wollongong Baptist Church described Ridley's mission as 'one of intensive interest':

As the services proceeded the numbers grew in a wonderful way. Many souls found the Saviour, and we rejoice (sic) that God blessed us in such a manner... To try to give figures for the work would only tend to try to limit the limitlessness of the Holy Spirit's work and power.

Nevertheless, missions thrive on statistics, and we read in a brief history of the church that '25 adults and 7 children indicated their desire to accept our Lord as their Saviour'. The Baptists had come to

Wollongong again, this time to stay and to multiply: Baptist Churches were opened at Thirroul, Port Kembla and Nowra before the end of 1938.

Post-Depression Expansion

In the later years of the 1930s a number of developments signified that the churches, slowed by the depression, were on the march again. Wollongong Baptist Church with seating for 250, was



Opening of Wollongong Baptist Church, 1937.

opened on 7 August 1937. The Wollongong Presbyterians sold their historic church in Crown Street to Woolworths in 1936, and built on the corner of Kembla and Burelli Streets, a striking church of Romanesque design, accommodating 500. A Hall, kindergarten and class rooms were attached. The complex cost 14,000 pounds and the splendid organ a further 1,700 pounds. Opened on 19 February 1938, the church boasts, on its northern side, a stained glass window which is a beautiful work of art. It was presented by John Radecki and is inscribed 'In grateful remembrance of William James of Shellharbour, and his wife, Elizabeth, who in 1882 befriended the artist and his father'. Apparently Caroline Chisholm was not the only emigrants' friend.



First St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wollongong, demolished 1937.



Second St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wollongong - opened 1938.

On 30 January 1938 the foundation stone was laid of the Little Flower Church, West Wollongong, to seat 525. The ceremony looked both backwards and forwards: backwards to Wollongong's popular parish priest, the late Father J.P. Dunne, to whose memory the church was to be built; forwards, in that the stone was laid by Bishop-coadjutor Norman Gilroy, who was appointed Archbishop in 1940 when William Kelly died, aged 90. The Anglicans had already (1933) appointed Howard Mowll as Archbishop, and on 1 September 1938, he appointed the Rev. G. Mottram as curate-in-charge of the Provisional District of West Wollongong. The simultaneous expansion of the Catholics and Anglicans into West Wollongong under two such energetic episcopal leaders ushered in a new period of expansion for Illawarra Churches.

CHAPTER EIGHT

METAMORPHOSIS: POST-WAR EXPANSION

1939 – 1961

TABLE OF EVENTS

1939 – 1961

1939

Outbreak of World War II

'Little Flower' RC school/church opened.

October - First service held for Presbyterian church, Wundang

Thirroul Baptist Church opened.

23 March - Port Kembla Baptist Church constituted.

16 April - Port Kembla Salvation Army separated from Wollongong Corps.

Seventh Day Adventist congregation first gathered at Wollongong.

1940

23 December - St. Andrew's C of E Warrawong and St. Thomas C of E Wundang opened.

Corrimal RC Parish and West Wollongong RC Parish created.

31 March - Dedication of Warrawong Presbyterian Church.

20 July - Foundation stone laid of Port Kembla Presbyterian Church by 'Flynn of the Inland' (opened 26 October).

Dapto-Albion Park Methodist Circuit formed

1941

St Stephen's C of E Port Kembla constituted a garrison church.

25 October - Opening of second St. John's C of E Keiraville.

15 March - St. Mary's business college and secondary school opened.

- 25 May - *St. Columbkille's RC Church, Carrimal, opened.*
- 25 March - *Beginning of Church of Christ Mission Wollongong.*
- 18 May - *Opening of Church of Christ, Market St. Wollongong*
 - *Wollongong Seventh Day Adventist church opened.*

1942

Missions to Seamen (C of E) established at Port Kembla.

- 2 September - *Wollongong proclaimed a city - prayer in all the churches on 6 December.*

1943

- 7 November - *First St. Mark's C of E West Wollongong opened.*

Dapto-Albion Park Presbyterian Parish divided. Dapto linked with Wollongong, Albion Park with Kiama

- 3 June - *Thirroul Seventh Day Adventist church dedicated.*

1944

Port Kembla Baptist Church opened

1945

Port Kembla now largest steelmaking centre in the Southern hemisphere

1946

Coal Strikes.

Australian Council of Churches established.

C of E Department of Promotion formed in Sydney.

1947

Creation of Joint Coal Board.

12 September - City of Greater Wollongong inaugurated.

Fairy Meadow RC Parish created.

1948

Formation of the World Council of Churches - first Assembly at Amsterdam.

Gwynneville RC Parish created.

Salvation Army band hall built at Woonona.

September - 10-days campaign by Salvation Army at Port Kembla - 70 seek God.

1949

6-week Coal Strike.

Methodist 'Crusade for Christ'.

Rev. Gordon Begbie appointed first Archdeacon of Wollongong.

St. Oswald's Bombo (C of E) sold.

Oak Flats transferred from Jamberoo Parish (C of E) to Albion Park-Dapto.

November - New Salvation Army band room opened at Woonona.

1950

January - Wollongong branch of Good Neighbour Council formed.

16 December - Institution of the Reformed Churches of Australia in Sydney.

19 November - Visit from Archbishop of Canterbury - service held in Crown Theatre, Wollongong.

30 May - Silver Jubilee of South Coast Festival (C of E)

Unanderra-Dapto Presbyterian Home Mission Station formed.

15 November - First Service, Warrawong Church of Christ.

1951

18 March - United service held in Whiteway Theatre (Port Kembla) to commemorate the Jubilee of the Commonwealth of Australia.

11 November - Archbishop of York spoke at Crown Theatre.

15 November - Bishop Thomas McCabe appointed first Catholic Bishop of Wollongong.

11 February - New brick St Michael's RC school Thurrowl opened.

25 February - St. Brigid's Church, Gwynneville opened.

Port Kembla Methodist Circuit created.

Keiraville Congregational Church discontinued.

August - First Reformed Church service in Bliwarra - held in Corrimal Methodist Church.

1952

1 June - Provisional District of West Kembla (C of E) formed: included Figtree, Unanderra, Mt. Kembla and Mt. St. Thomas.

21 November - West Wollongong C of E achieved full parish status.

2 November - St. John Flannery's RC church, Fairy Meadow, opened.

6 November - Unanderra RC Parish created.

New Klamia Catholic School opened.

Corrimal Convent completed.

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17 December - Presbyterian Home Mission Station started at Figtree.

Albion Park and Oak Flats combined to form a Presbyterian Home Mission Station

1953

2 June - Coronation of Elizabeth II.

October - New St. Aidan's Balgownie (C of E) opened.

Shellharbour RC Parish created.

Albion Park Methodist Church opened

11 March - Corrimal Baptist Church constituted.

1954

ALP Split.

Methodist 'Mission to the Nation'

February - 10 o'clock closing introduced.

September - St. Matthew's C of E hall, Mt. St. Thomas, foundation stone laid.

9 October - St. James C of E Foxground destroyed by fire.

21 November - Immaculate Conception RC Church, Unanderra, opened

11 July - Towradgi Congregational Church Fellowship formed

1955

Gerrungong joined Berry Parish (C of E).

5 February - SCEGGS opened at Gleniffer Brae

New RC school Helensburgh opened

- 3 July - Italian Centre, Wollongong, opened.*
- 24 September - Methodist Church hall Unanderra, opened.*
- 3 September - Fairy Meadow Congregational Church and hall opened.*
- 26 November - Congregational Church, Towradgi, opened.*
- 10 September - Present Salvation Army Citadel, Wollongong, opened.*
- November - Salvation Army Mission - 164 enquiries.*
- First meeting of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Wollongong (ELCA).*

1956

- 21 October - C of E Department of Promotion in the Diocese of Sydney began its Every Member Canvass under the direction of Rev. R.S. Walker.*
- 5 November - St. Matthew's Primbee opened (C of E)*
- Warrawong RC Parish created.*
- May - St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Unanderra, opened.*
- 20 July - Warilla Baptist Church opened*

1957

- 'Bring out a Briton' immigration campaign supported by the churches*
- Rev. L.J. Wiggins C of E Diocesan Immigration Officer (first Port Kembla parishioner in Holy Orders).*
- Anglican T.V. Society formed.*
- May - Opening of new brick St. David's C of E, Thurroul.*
- 28 September - Opening of St. Peter's C of E Church hall, Unanderra*
- 20 October - St. Luke's Warilla Sunday School hall (C of E) opened.*

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- 1 January* - *Figtree became a sanctioned charge (Presbyterian).*
July - *Father Basil Christofis appointed first Greek Orthodox priest in Wollongong.*

1958

Pope John XXIII elected.

Hugh Rowlands Gough appointed Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

Church Attendance Movement (interdenominational) motto: 'The answer is God. Worship Him at Church every week, at home every day'.

Helensburgh and Stanwell Park became part of new C of E Parish of Engadine.

- 6 July* - *Foundation stone blessed of new St. John's RC Church, Dapto.*

Shellharbour Presbyterian Church separated from Kiama and became a Home Mission Station with Albion Park and Oak Flats.

- 20 July* - *Martin Luther Parish of Wollongong constituted (UELCA)*

Lutheran Church constituted at Oak Flats.

1959

First Sydney Billy Graham Crusade (12 April - 17 May).

The Illawarra Grammar School opened.

Dapto RC Parish created.

- January* - *New St. John's RC School, Dapto, opened*

- 8 February* - *St. Pius X RC School, Unanderra, opened*

- 12 December* - *West Wollongong Methodist Church opened.*

Keiraville Independent Congregational Church formed by J W Brookes

Corrimal Baptist Church built.

12 December - Dedication of Reformed Church, Fairy Meadows.

18 April - Dedication of Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall, Figtree.

1960

First stage of Inner Harbour, Port Kembla opened.

1 April - St John's C of E, Keiraville, separated from West Wollongong to become a Provisional District.

13 March - New Italian Centre opened.

30 April - Wesley Youth Centre, Wollongong, opened.

September - New Salvation Army hall, Woonona, opened.

1961

Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches held at New Delhi.

30 September -

11 October - Joe Blinco (associate of Billy Graham) took mission in Wollongong 600 decisions for Christ.

12 June - Provisional District of Albion Park (C of E) formed (Albion Park, Oak Flats, Albion Park Rail).

2 July - Closure of Mount Brandon-Jerrara (C of E) church hall.

Corrimal Catholic School completed (first phase).

25 March - Methodist Church/hall opened at Coledale and Bellambi Methodist Church (brick) replaced 60 year old timber church.

18 March - Port Kembla Methodist Church and hall opened (Fitzwilliam Street).

Within 15 years of the end of World War II the religious landscape of Illawarra had changed beyond recognition, reflecting Wollongong's transition from country town to cosmopolitan city. Rapid economic development began in Illawarra in the late 1930s. A surge in the expansion of heavy metal industries created suburbs overnight in areas south and west of Port Kembla: Cringila, Warrawong, Windang, and Warilla. The war dampened consumer spending and building construction and lowered the percentage of migrants in the population, but that was only a lull in the midst of the storm. By 1945 there were 53 factories in Wollongong and 25 at Port Kembla which was on its way to becoming the largest steelmaking centre in the southern hemisphere. Wollongong was poised on the brink of its 'metamorphosis to suburbia', and the two decades following World War II saw explosive urban development. The population increased by 10% annually, and the percentage of migrants in the population doubled. The social infrastructure, of which the churches are part, reeled under the strain: the per capita provision of health and sanitary services was the lowest in NSW. The housing situation was desperate, resulting in rapid land subdivision, inadequate local government supervision, and a high Housing Commission component (25% of all dwellings built in the period).

1. IMPACT OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT AND POPULATION INCREASE ON THE CHURCHES

Unfortunately, research on Australian churches in general and Illawarra churches in particular in this period is virtually non-existent. We shall have to be content with impressions which might easily prove false when illuminated by adequate research. Three impressions deserve attention. First, the Catholic Church emerged from the challenge greatly strengthened. Second, the mainstream Protestant denominations failed to make an adequate organisational response, although their concentration on evangelism through missions stemmed the tide of mass defection. Third, new vigorous denominations, the Churches of Christ and Seventh Day Adventists, took root in Illawarra soil, while migrants introduced 'ethnic' churches.

The Catholic Response

Never in its history had Illawarra Catholicism come under such strain, and never before had it grown more vigorously. The shortage

of priests had never been more evident, the schools were more crowded than ever, the Irish brand of Catholicism was more challenged than ever, and political issues such as the anti-Communist and the pro-state aid crusades had never been more sensitive. The number of Catholic parishes in Illawarra more than doubled from 7 in 1937, when Port Kembla was made a parish, to 15 in 1959 when Dapto, then experiencing the fastest residential development in Illawarra, was made a parish.

TABLE IX

NEW ILLAWARRA CATHOLIC PARISHES 1937-63

Port Kembla 1937	Unanderra 1952
Corrimal 1940	Shellharbour 1953
West Wollongong 1940	Warrawong 1956
Fairy Meadow 1947	Dapto 1959
Gwynneville 1948	Berkeley 1963



Enthronement of Bishop McCabe, 1952.

In 1951, following a survey of the region by Apostolic Delegate, Marella, accompanied by a secretary who was as free with his camera as he was tight with his information, the Diocese of Wollongong was carved out of the Sydney and Canberra-Goulburn Archdioceses. On 15 November Thomas McCabe was appointed first Bishop of Wollongong and was enthroned in St. Francis Xavier's, now a cathedral, on 24 February 1952.

The Protestant Response

The major Protestant churches reacted to the demands of the times more tentatively than the Catholics. The Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians avoided major organisational and administrative changes, and created few parishes or circuits. They appeared to be tinkering with their structures: the transfer of a branch church from one parish to another, the starting of a new provisional district here or a new home mission station there. They were responding to, rather than anticipating, developments, unlike the Catholics who started four new parishes in the 1940s before the great invasion of European Catholics. Still acting on the principle of 'holy emulation', St. Michael's Parish Councillors in 1951 suggested the creation of an Anglican Diocese of Wollongong, but it was not then seriously mooted.

It is perhaps unfair to accuse the Protestants of an inadequate organisational response. They were not primarily interested in ecclesiastical structures. Their organisational powers were directed towards mounting a series of interdenominational missions culminating in the Billy Graham Crusade of 1959. Relations between Protestant clergy had never been stronger, a reflection of their common Evangelical heritage.

New Denominations

Not since the settlement of Illawarra had so many Christian denominations commenced enduring ministries. The Church of Christ and the Seventh Day Adventists came to Wollongong in the early war years. Most of the new expressions of the Christian faith, however, were the product of post-war immigration.

TABLE X
URBAN ILLAWARRA POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Year	Australia	U.K.	Germany	Greece	Italy	Malta	Netherlands	Poland	Yugoslavia
1947	34,230 86.1%	7,654 12.1%	29 0.05	60 1	272 0.3	22 0.03	— 0.1	14 0.02	51 0.08
1954	74,999 77.82%	12,138 12.62	1,212 1.27	535 0.55	1,463 1.52	324 0.34	1,654 1.71	872 0.91	483 0.49
1961	104,565 72.04%	16,306 11.17	4,334 2.98	1,579 1.09	5,705 3.98	697 0.48	2,796 1.93	961 0.66	2,282 1.57

Source: M. G. A. Wilson, 'Growth and Change in the Population of the Urban Illawarra', in R. Robinson (ed.), *Urban Illawarra* (1977), p. 243.

In 1947, 86% of urban Illawarra's population was born in Australia. Of the remaining 14% over 12% were born in U.K., presumably most of whom were nominal Anglicans. Between 1947 and 1961 this U.K. percentage remained fairly constant, whereas the percentage born in other parts of Europe increased dramatically from 1% to 16%. Most of these were Catholics from Italy, Yugoslavia, Malta, Poland, and Spain, creating either ethnic Catholic churches or some friction in the traditional Irish Australian Catholic churches. Significant numbers of immigrants came from Holland, Germany and Greece, creating respectively Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and Orthodox Churches.

2. IMMIGRATION AND THE CHURCHES

Most of the denominations, whose headquarters were in Sydney, responded to the challenge of post-war immigration by appointing immigration chaplains or occasionally evangelists who spoke a non-English language. Such workers tended to be larger than life, but their task was impossible even for giants: within six months of the announcement in 1947 of the assisted immigration scheme, 157,000 Britons registered at Australia House in London as potential immigrants. Throughout this period, until the 'Bring out a Briton' campaign in the late '50s, Protestants were encouraged in church papers to invite their British friends and relatives to migrate to Australia 'to ensure that the Protestant faith and culture of Australia are safeguarded'. In Illawarra, English-speaking migrants were housed in hostels other than those used for non-British Europeans. Sunday

schools were established in the former by local Protestant churches. Protestants were probably more successful at inducing Britons to migrate than to join their churches, but a feature distinguishing Anglican churches in Illawarra from most other churches in the Diocese of Sydney is that they have a high proportion of English-born members and lay leaders.

The Challenge of European Catholicism

If the observer has to look carefully to discern the impact of migrants on the mainstream Protestant denominations, he experiences no such difficulty with the Catholic Church. Admittedly, the proportion of immigrants attending Catholic churches and schools was lower than that of Australian Catholics, but the absolute numbers were sufficiently large to strain severely the Church's pastoral and teaching resources. Hence the traditional 'cultural thinness and day-to-day pragmatism' of Australian Catholicism was reinforced by immigration, and the Church remained as it had always been - a missionary church.

Priests involved in ministry to migrants had little time to reflect on the implications of immigration for the Church: they were more concerned for the implications of immigration for the migrant. The imbalance of the sexes recalled Illawarra's early history, and created grave problems. In 1961 there were about 120 males for every 100 females in the age range 20-44 in the Illawarra population. Among some Southern European groups, sex ratios of 150-250 could be found. Priests were appalled at the sights they witnessed: 14 people living in one room; prostitutes brought to hostels from Sydney for sex-starved immigrants.

Churchgoing among Catholic Immigrants

Worship in traditional Australian Catholic churches was of little comfort to European migrants who were accustomed to more ebullient and colourful services and to a more relaxed, less deferential, attitude to priests. The inflexibility, inhospitality, and cultural arrogance of Australian Catholicism are said to explain why European Catholic migrants attended church so poorly. Another suggestion is that immigrants felt keenly the inadequacy of the Church's assistance to migrants. Twenty-three Southern Italian Immigrants living

in the Port Kembla-Cringila-Lake Illawarra area were asked in 1975 if the Church had assisted in adjustment to Australian life. Not one acknowledged any assistance. A question on church attendance embarrassed them: evidently they only attended weddings, baptisms, and feast days. Symptomatic of the Church's insensitivity to the spiritual needs of immigrants is the small number of European Catholics who joined such sects as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, or the Christadelphians.

Self-criticism can be healthy, but church people habitually over-do it, and before they blame themselves too harshly for their failure to achieve high levels of migrant attendance, they should consider the fact that many migrants had never been enthusiastic church-goers. Most Sicilian migrants, C. Cronin tells us (*The Story of Change*, 1970, p.42), had been nominal Catholics back home in Sicily and attended Mass infrequently. The Maltese, said to be more Roman than the Romans, had been much better Mass-goers than the Sicilians, and their enthusiastic attendance at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Warrawong, where the Feast of Our Lady of Victories is held annually, suggests that they maintained the habit in Australia. Many European Catholic immigrants, however, while they give money to the Church and attend at Christmas and other Festivals, have never been weekly attenders at Mass.

What did the Catholic Church in Illawarra do for migrants? It was recognised that most Catholic priests, English-speaking and of Irish extraction, had insufficient linguistic and cultural knowledge to meet the needs of immigrants. Accordingly, chaplains of various nationalities - German, Polish, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian etc. visited Wollongong, usually monthly. Based at St. Francis Xavier's, they visited migrants in their homes and hostels and celebrated Mass for them. In 1962 the Wollongong Hungarian community presented the Cathedral with a stained glass window in the porch in memory of the Hungarian uprising of 1956. In 1964 the Polish community presented a window to commemorate Bishop McCabe's silver jubilee as a bishop.

The Scalabrinian Fathers

Bishop McCabe presided over a more concentrated experiment to meet migrants' needs at Unanderra, near two migrant hostels. In

late 1952 two Scalabrinians, Father Tarcisio Prevedello and Brother John Setti, were welcomed from the United States and put in charge of the new parish of Unanderra 'in order to secure the spiritual care of Italian migrants' in the Diocese of Wollongong. Named after John Baptist Scalabrini (1839-1905), Bishop of Piacenza, the Scalabrinians or the Pious Society of St. Charles, understand that their mission is 'to preserve in the hearts of Italian migrants and their descendants the Catholic Faith, and work for their spiritual and, as far as possible, temporal welfare'.



Unanderra Catholic Church.

'We didn't come down here to see the mountains or the sea,' remarked John Setti, 'we came here to work - to build a parish'. There was plenty of work to do: the only church was five kilometres away at Mt. Kembla, the old miner's church of St. Clement. Father Prevedello was determined to erect at Unanderra a splendid church called 'The Immaculate Conception'. Many years earlier he had vowed to the Blessed Virgin Mary that if he survived a critical illness he would raise a church in her honour. On 8 December 1953, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the beginning

of the Marian Year, the church's foundation stone was laid. Opened at the end of the Marian Year, the church is of pleasing classical lines modelled on early Roman basilicas, seats 500, and is decorated with striking works of art. One painting in the ceiling of the nave depicts the Coronation of Our Lady surrounded by the Blessed Trinity. A stained glass wheel window divided into four segments depicts the mysteries of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary, the portrait head of Pope Pius IX who promulgated the former dogma in 1854 and that of Pius XII who defined the latter dogma in 1950. The building of the presbytery followed quickly in 1957 and St. Pius X school, run by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, was opened in 1959.

That the Unanderra Church catered heavily for Italians is suggested by the proportion of Italian weddings celebrated there (45% of all weddings, compared with 12% at Warrawong and under 2% at Wollongong).

TABLE XI

ITALIAN MARRIAGES – UNANDERRA CATHOLIC CHURCH

Year	Total Marriages All Nationalities	Italian Boy Italian Girl	Australian Boy Italian Girl	Italian Boy Australian Girl	Italian to Other Nationality
1953	6	5	0	0	1
4	7	6	0	0	0
5	18	10	0	0	1
6	30	6	0	2	1
7	43	14	0	3	3
8	56	25	0	5	2
9	67	36	0	2	4
1960	59	36	0	1	1
1	64	38	0	1	2
2	80	46	0	0	3
3	73	39	0	1	6
4	42	28	0	0	3
5	68	22	0	0	6
6	58	33	0	0	2
7	71	29	1	3	1
8	50	26	0	2	5
9	63	19	1	1	4
1970	38	17	0	2	6
1	38	21	1	2	2
2	44	15	3	5	5
3	55	15	1	2	1
4	26	5	1	0	0
Total	1,096	491	8	32	59

Source: V. Owen, *The History of Italians in Wollongong, 1945-74*, M.A. Thesis, University of Wollongong, 1973, appendix G.

It should not be concluded that the high proportion of Italian marriages at Unanderra means that Italians identified as a community with that church alone, making it something of a repository of Italian spirituality. Previously, Italians expected an Italian priest to travel to any parish to take a wedding. It was more convenient for Italian couples from all over Illawarra to be married at Unanderra.

In July, 1977, almost 25 years after the institution of the parish and long after the disappearance of the migrant hostels, the Scalabrinians handed the church over to the Bishop of Wollongong who appointed an Australian priest, Fr. Leo Stevens.

The International Centre

The main focus of Scalabrinian pastoral activity shifted to the Italian Centre established in Wollongong in 1955 and renamed the International Centre in 1976. Equipped with dining room and classrooms, the Centre has social and educational objectives as well as religious. English classes for migrants were held at the Centre from its inception, and over 600 Italian migrants were taught English there during its first decade. The pastoral effectiveness of the Scalabrinian priests in identifying and meeting the needs of migrants was strengthened by the Italian Catholic Federation, a lay society with five branches throughout Illawarra and 230 members in the mid-1960s.

Attached to the Centre is the Sacred Heart War Memorial Shrine or chapel designed by Sydney architect, Gino Valpato, who also designed the 14 bronze plaques, inspired by the shroud of Turin, depicting the stations of the cross. Bishop McCabe at first allowed the chapel to be used only for the private prayer of the priest. He later allowed the celebration of Mass on Sundays, but required baptisms,



Sacred Heart Chapel, International Centre.

marriages and funerals to be held at Unanderra. Bishop Murray allows all services at the chapel where two Italian Masses and one Spanish Mass are held each Sunday. The Scalabrigian Fathers also say Mass in Italian at the Catholic Churches at Fairy Meadow and Corrimal.

The Feast of St. John the Baptist

Symbolic of the creative tension between European and Australian Catholicism is the statue of St. John the Baptist, held at the International Centre but locked away from public view and brought out once a year for the procession for the Feast of St. John the Baptist. Outdoor processions are popular in Southern Europe partly because fine weather can be guaranteed at certain times of the year. Each village has a patron saint and an annual feast day for the saint. A saint was adopted as a patron saint when his intervention was sought to resolve a major conflict in the life of the community. The saint's festival is therefore the annual ritual enactment of the community's victory over danger. The festival is normally organised by a society into whose treasury is paid the paper money pinned to the coat of the processing saint. In Wollongong that society is known as the Association of John the Baptist. The festival is imported from a village in Southern Italy of which John the Baptist is the patron saint.

Australian Catholics were at first critical of the Association's way of celebrating the festival for a number of reasons. Some did not like the ornate statue, representing that baroque Catholicism which offends the taste of many moderns. Others thought pinning money to a coat a vulgar way of fund-raising. Still others thought that the parading of such cultic practices, the product of a superstitious, pre-scientific age, threatened their quest for respectability in a society whose prevailing values are set by Protestants and secularists.

It is probably true to say that many non-Europeans now take considerable pleasure in the procession, recognising that all flamboyance is good for tourism and perhaps sensing that the Catholic Church is most truly Catholic when characterised by ethnic pluralism. It is the genius of the Catholic Church since Vatican II (1962-65) that it seeks to satisfy the Christian's longing for a genuine world

Church and a gospel which is not culture bound by looking for the truth in every expression of man's religiosity, including festivals originating in regional, folk beliefs. The old Protestants - and respectable Australian Catholics, too, for that matter - would have condemned what is wrong in such cultic practices. The new Catholics seek to affirm what is right.

(This section on immigration and Catholicism is based on the sources cited in tables X and XI and on discussions with Gerardo Zampaglione, historian of Illawarra Italians, and Fr. Angelo at the International Centre.)

3. CATHOLICS AND COMMUNISM

During the Cold War years Illawarra church papers contained copious anti-Communist material. Life in Communist countries was contrasted with 'the Christian way of life'. In 1952/3 Archbishop Mowll commended an appeal of the Church Missionary Society to send missionaries to South-East Asia on the grounds that Christian missionary activity was the best antidote to Communism. Anti-Communism, however, was most deeply entrenched in the Catholic Church, where it assumed political and industrial significance.

Under Pope Pius XI (1922-39) Communism had come to be viewed as the greatest enemy of the Church, as an anti-Christ, as something purely evil with which there could be no collaboration. The Spanish Civil War was seen as a fight between Christianity and Communism. In 1937 Pius XI condemned atheistic Communism in the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*. In that same year the Australian Catholic bishops established the National Secretariat of Catholic Action to bring lay Catholic opinion to bear on every sector of life. To its staff it appointed B.A. Santamaria, a determined advocate of the destruction of Communism in the labour movement.

Santamaria despised merely theoretical Christianity. Like Marx he wanted to change the world and the best way to do it, he believed, was to emulate the Communists: Catholic militants were to be trained in Communist techniques and research into Communist methods was to be conducted. Hence, in 1941, the National Secretariat established in Melbourne the Catholic Social Studies Movement, popularly known as 'the Movement'. At about the same time another

veteran anti-Communist, the Rev. Dr. P.J. Ryan, established a similar organisation in Sydney. The two organisations merged in 1945.

Shortly after the Movement was launched, Pat Driscoll, an Illawarra Catholic steel-worker then living at Figtree, and others were invited to a meeting at the Little Flower Church, West Wollongong. Here they met Fr. Ryan and Bob Santamaria. The meeting resulted in the formation of branches of the Movement in Wollongong. The co-ordinator of the Movement in Illawarra was given no title as a measure of secrecy and worked directly with Fr. Ryan in Sydney to set up branches at West Wollongong, Corrimal, and Bulli. The work involved Driscoll in monthly trips on unreliable war-time trains, at the same time he had to contend with shift work and the rearing of a young family.



Little Flower Catholic Church, West Wollongong.

Weekly meetings were held at different venues to confuse the Communist opposition, but always in Catholic schools, Monsignor O'Reilly of Bulli, Father Riley of Fairy Meadow, and Monsignor Mulheren of West Wollongong were all supporters of the activity, while the parish priests of Wollongong (Fr. Callaghan) and of Port

Kembla (Fr. Gallagher) were not. The meetings, which attracted about 60 members, were given lists of known Communists in the Wollongong region together with details of Communist strategies. Members concentrated on countering Communist control of the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA) at the local level by producing and distributing pamphlets and posters, encouraging attendance at Union meetings especially when elections were held, and organising public meetings. At some of these Fr. Ryan lectured on Communism and debated with hecklers. On one such occasion in Wollongong Town Hall, Ryan was challenged to a debate on Communism by one Moustaka. Ryan agreed on condition that the loser would donate 100 pounds to Wollongong Hospital. The challenge was withdrawn.

The Movement had its successes. Billy Frame, Communist secretary of the Port Kembla branch of the FIA, was ousted by Tom Malcolm, staunch Catholic and ALP member. Malcolm, however, was not a member of 'the Movement', complaining it was too 'white collar'.

The Movement was undermined by factions within the Catholic Church itself. There was disagreement over who should control it, clergy or laity, and there was also a division of opinion between Sydney and Melbourne as to how it should be run. Sydney bishops favoured tight clerical control, whereas Melbourne allowed latitude to the laity. In 1954 Fr. Ryan was sacked in what was seen as a Melbourne takeover. Ryan and the Sydney bishops were thereafter determined to crush the Movement. In Wollongong, Bishop McCabe wrote to Driscoll asking for details of his activities in a half-hearted attempt to curb the Movement. But the whole business obviously made McCabe nervous, and when Driscoll did not reply to his letter, he could never bring himself to pursue the matter directly with Driscoll.

Instead a secretive lay organisation, the Knights of the Southern Cross (KSC) was deployed to destroy the local Movement. The KSC, formed in 1919 by lay Catholics who felt discriminated against by Masons and Protestants, worked on masonic lines for the protection or preferment of Catholics and was totally at the disposal of the hierarchy. It would figure again in Wollongong in countering lay movements of which the Bishop did not approve. The KSC sought to

duplicate Movement activities, thereby rendering it unnecessary.

The *coup de grace* of the Movement in Wollongong, however, was the ALP Split of 1954/55. The ALP had also been countering the Communist unionists by the formation of Industrial Groups ('Groupers') which co-ordinated anti-Communist forces. It has been estimated that about 30% of Groupers were also members of the Movement. But this proportion may have been greater in Wollongong, because Driscoll recalls that, once the ALP withdrew its official support from the Industrial Groups, there was such an exodus of ALP members from the Movement that it collapsed in Wollongong. In Victoria, the DLP came into being to continue the Movement's anti-Communism, but in NSW Catholic bishops persuaded the faithful that the church's anti-Communist and political goals could be served best by close support of the ALP. (On Catholics and Communists see G. Henderson, *Mr. Santamaria and the Bishops*, 1982; P. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia*, 1977, pp.388-403; M. Charlesworth, *Church, State and Conscience*, 1973, chs. 3 & 7).

4. THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

We have already recorded our impression that the mainstream Protestant denominations responded rather haphazardly to, rather than anticipated, explosive post-war growth in Illawarra. Some might contend that this fundamentally misreads the situation: Protestant initiatives tended to spring up from below and are therefore difficult for the historian to chart, whereas Catholic strategies were superimposed from above. And, Protestant leaders did make some decisions of far-reaching consequence.

Illawarra Anglicanism, although not formed into a diocese like the Catholics, was led by men of episcopal stature during this period: R.C.M. Long, rector of St. Michael's and rural dean from 1941 to 1949, and Archdeacon H.G.S. Begbie from 1949 to 1960. Long was a considerable scholar and sound Bible expositor. His relationship with Evangelical clergy of other denominations was close, and ushered in two decades of Protestant co-operation, unequalled before or since, focussing on missions and church extension, and social issues such as temperance and Sunday observance. Begbie's strategy was aimed more at the advancement of the Anglican church. Shortly



R.C.M. Long.



H.G.S. Begbie.

after his appointment, he spoke of the need to buy land for more churches, church schools, and a theological college for the day when Wollongong became a separate Anglican diocese. Unlike Long, who considered private schools unsuited to Illawarra (it was so egalitarian!), Begbie was convinced that it was time Illawarra people were allowed this option. Hence, the Sydney Church of England Girls' Grammar School at Glenniffer Brae was opened in 1955 and the Illawarra Grammar School for boys in 1959.

A remarkable example of common sense planning occurred in 1949 when ministers of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational churches at Wollongong, together with the Home Mission directors of their respective denominations, toured Greater Wollongong, zoning it into denominational districts to 'prevent overlapping and unhealthy competition'. The Congregationalists, for example, were allocated Towradgi and Fairy Meadow and by 1955 had built churches in both places. In 1951 the Wollongong Ministers Fraternal organised a house-to-house survey. Each denomination was responsible for a prescribed zone. The purpose was to update denominational membership rolls. In 1961 the Methodists and Presbyterians, fore-

seeing union (16 years before its achievement), resolved not to duplicate churches in the adjacent suburbs of West Wollongong and Figtree. The Presbyterians closed the old Union Church in Rosemont Street, West Wollongong, and developed a valuable work in Uralba Street, Figtree. The Methodists sold land in Figtree and concentrated on their work in Fisher Street, West Wollongong. Relations between the Protestant churches were so good that such joint planning was always possible. It is a pity there was not more of it.

Every Member Canvass

On Australian Methodism in the post-World War II period, J.D. Bollen has written (*Religion in Australian Society*, p.62):

... one sees not a course steadily pursued but erratic spurts of interest and changes of direction. Crusade for Christ, Mission to the Nation, Stewardship, Billy Graham, Church and Life, Billy Graham again, the charismatic movement: these are the zig-zags of Methodism's quest for its youthful vigour.

Not overly-impressed by any of the above activities, Bollen is most critical of the emphasis on stewardship which resulted in 'Every Member Canvass' campaigns in many Australian Protestant churches. 'one of the truly pathetic episodes of modern Christian history'.

The Every Member Canvass was imported from America in 1954 by Colonel Wells of the Wells Organization Pty. Ltd. 'The churches are dead,' declared Wells, 'because of token giving'. Ninety per cent of churchgoers were giving only token sums to their church. Token giving betokens token interest, for 'where your treasure is there will your heart be also'. Amazing reversals in church fortunes were soon reported, and the scheme was widely tried throughout Australia. Bollen's condemnation is unsparing:

The church's ready conversion may be understood in terms of their bad conscience about mission and their institutional needs. The genius of the Wells Way was that it solved the first while it solved the second. The Church had not seen such a beneficial relationship between piety and its finances since the days of Johannes Tetzl (op.cit, p. 64).

Unlike Tetzl, however, Wells provoked no Martin Luther to

oppose him, and without clear theological reasons to condemn the movement, we may be forgiven for concluding that it did some good. The Wollongong Methodist Circuit, for example, after 7 weeks canvassing by 50 men, received pledges of 38,200 pounds, of which over 90% was collected. The amount pledged was the highest reached by an Australian circuit at that time. It allowed planned development of the circuit, including the erection of West Wollongong Methodist Church which, when opened on 12 December 1959, surprised even the members with its satisfactory appearance. The Kiama Methodist Circuit Canvass realised an amount of over 10,000 pounds. For the first time in its history the church, the work of which had been hindered chronically by financial difficulties, managed to extricate itself from debt. Giving to missions was increased by 30% and a 'slight, but noticeable, increase was seen in congregations and the general interest in Church activity increased many times'.



Methodist Church, West Wollongong.

In the Church of England the Every Member Canvass was institutionalised within the Department of Promotion, established in 1955 to give 'positive Christian teaching' on stewardship. It offered professional help to parishes choosing to employ the scheme. The appeal at Dapto was described as 'enormously successful', resulting in increased congregations, an increase in Sunday school enrolments, and more active lay participation in church affairs. It was also observed that the campaign strengthened inter-denominational co-operation, as canvassing would refer those whom they visited to visitors of their own denominations. At Corrimal the canvass was chaired by prominent local physician, Dr. Max Diment. The 1956 'loyalty dinner' associated with the canvass was described as 'the greatest social event' in the parish's history. Similarly, the rector of Kiama described the canvass in his parish as 'one of the biggest

forward movements in the history of our church'. Both Corrimal and Kiama parishes reported short-term increases in offertories, followed by the gradual 'fizzling out' of the campaign as more and more people did not honour their pledges. It appears that movements imported from outside the congregation to expand churches cannot be institutionalised. That is not necessarily to find fault with the movements themselves, but rather with the expectation that they will of themselves revive the church and initiate sustained growth.

THE CHURCH HERALD DINNER EDITION

Established 1888

October, 1966

PARISH
OF
CORRIMAL

EVERY MEMBER CANVASS

Loyalty Dinner



MR & MRS D. W. STREET

GENERAL CHAIRMAN

This day's gathering followed by the Ladies' Union in support of the Every Member Canvass. The Ladies' Union, composed of the wives and daughters of the members, is a very active and helpful group. They are now planning to hold a similar gathering in the near future.

WILLIAM STREET
General Chairman

CHAIRMAN WOMEN

I am very pleased that the Ladies' Union in support of the Every Member Canvass is so active. The Ladies' Union, composed of the wives and daughters of the members, is a very active and helpful group. They are now planning to hold a similar gathering in the near future.

MRS. STREET
Chairman Women

St. Alban's Anglican Church, Corrimal,
Every Member Canvass publication.

Missions

In the 1950s Protestants trusted most in evangelistic missions to win the lost for Christ, culminating in the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade. A highly successful Anglican mission was held at Wollongong in May 1952 by Dr. Howard Guinness, a missionary popular with university students. The mission won for Christ some who are still lay leaders in Illawarra churches.

A second Anglican mission, 10-20 May 1957, was known as the Key Mission. Organised by the Rev. Bernie Gook of the Church of England Board of Diocesan Missions, it was held simultaneously at all parishes from Helensburgh to Dapto. Missioners at each centre were assisted by teams of students from Moore Theological College. The mission at Port Kembla, led by college principal and later Archbishop of Sydney, Marcus Loane, was described as 'a remarkable experience': the church had been filled on every night of the mission. At Figtree the team was led by D.W.B. Robinson, the present Archbishop of Sydney. 'Wonderful blessing from our heavenly Father was experienced in all... centres during those eleven days', reported J.J. St. Clair, the parish minister, 'no less than 33 people expressing a desire to accept Christ as their friend and Saviour'. Similarly, at West Wollongong, where the team was led by college vice-principal, Broughton Knox, many are said to have found new directions for their lives. The Key Mission was unusually successful, probably because it capitalised on the increased interest in the church stimulated by the concurrent stewardship campaign.



St. Mark's Anglican Church, West Wollongong. Built of steel and concrete and opened in 1962, the structure symbolises the industries of the region.

Evangelistic missions were the chief focus of interdenominational co-operation. In late 1948 the rector of St. Michael's, R.C.M. Long, put to the highly receptive Ministers Fraternal the need for

a United Churches Crusade in Wollongong. The missionary was the great Baptist evangelist, John Ridley, whom we met in the previous chapter, and he attracted crowds of between 600 and 900 to the Savoy Theatre.

Billy Graham Crusade

The finest fruit of interdenominational co-operation was the Billy Graham Crusade held in Sydney from 12 April to 17 May, 1959. As they prepared for the crusade, Illawarra clergy described their unity with such epithets as 'magnificent' and 'splendid'. Ministers fraternals in the region were assisted by five lay committees. Expectation was high among clergy and laity alike. Owen Dykes, rector of Port Kembla, spoke for all of them when he said:

Billy Graham is God's chosen prophet for this generation. He is an average, handsome American in his early forties, who confesses to being an average preacher of average intelligence and not particularly well-educated (the average Ocker was expected to take all this as commendation!).

The tremendous impact of Dr. Graham, who has preached to more people than any man in the history of the world, cannot be explained by normal physical means. Dr. Graham preaches God's word - the Bible - on which the Protestant Reformed Church bases its whole faith. Billy Graham believes that people must be led to make a definite decision for Christ, just as Church of England members believe in and practise the rite of Confirmation (*Id.*, 7 April, 1959).

The vast and increasing crowds attending the Sydney Crusade attracted and kept the attention of the Illawarra media. At the opening rally, attended by 50,000, Graham spoke for an hour and a half reported the *Illawarra Mercury*, and held his audience spell-bound. Graham said he had five objectives: first, to get the City of Sydney talking about religion since apathy was a bigger problem than atheism; second, to see the churches revitalised; third, to instil a new social conscience in the community; fourth, to win people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and fifth, to bring new hope in an age of despair.

The Wollongong Council of Churches arranged for buses and cars to transport thousands of Illawarra people to the Sydney meetings, while the great preacher could be heard locally, at marquees

erected at South Beach, Wollongong, and at Port Kembla to which the Gospel message was relayed by landline.

By the end of the second week of the five-week Crusade it was evident even to clergy sceptical of the Graham phenomenon that the impact was going to be permanent. Already a marked increase in churchgoing was observed in Sydney. Billy Graham, himself, had never experienced such a response. 'Spiritual hunger in Sydney is the greatest I have ever known in my ministry', he said. 'This is the work of the Holy Spirit'.

By this time - two weeks into the Crusade - more than 40 bus loads of people had gone to the Crusade from Wollongong in addition to others from Port Kembla, Dapto, Bulli, Shellharbour, Nowra and Milton. Illawarra ministers were reporting 'daily miracles of God's grace in changed lives. Homes were being restored, and whole families were dedicating themselves to Christ. Churches were being revived.'

Those who made decisions for Christ at the Crusade were referred by Crusade headquarters to their local churches. Available statistics suggest significant impact: for example 130 people were referred to St. Mark's Anglican Church, West Wollongong; 70 to All Saints Anglican Church, Figtree; 50 to the Port Kembla Methodist Circuit; 51 to the Bulli Methodist Circuit. Of the 70 Figtree referrals, 46 were aged between 13 and 20, and of them 30 accepted the rector's invitation to meet on Friday night for fellowship. These figures are probably typical of Illawarra Protestant churches: the Crusade's greatest impact was on youth, and many were won to the church permanently. Two years after the Crusade, Port Kembla Methodist Church still gloried in the 'spiritual tone' resulting from the Crusade 'which had rarely if ever been experienced before'. True enough. Not since the 1902 revival had Illawarra received such a visitation of the Spirit.

5. NEW DENOMINATIONS: SDA'S, CHURCHES OF CHRIST, LUTHERANS, AND REFORMED

Among the new Christian denominations which came to Illawarra in this period, two were the product of evangelistic missions and heightened interest in prophecy - the Seventh-Day Adventists and the

Churches of Christ - while others were immigrant churches: Lutheran, 'Dutch' Reformed, and Orthodox. We shall consider each in turn, reserving the Orthodox for the next chapter.

Seventh-Day Adventists

Seventh-Day Adventists date their foundation from 1844, the year when Christ would come again according to New England (USA) farmer, William Miller. Ellen White, prophetess of the movement, revealed that Miller was not wrong in his date (22 October 1844), but in his interpretation of that event. It referred, not to Christ's physical return to earth, but to his spiritual entry into the heavenly sanctuary there to begin his last work of atonement and judgment, just as the Levite high priest in the Old Testament moved from the holy place to the most holy place.

In addition to their interest in the nearness of Christ's return, Seventh-Day Adventists are strict Sabbatarians and worship on Saturday. Following Christ's example, children are dedicated and adults are baptised by immersion. Adventists observe Old Testament dietary laws, and, in reality, most go beyond them, practising vegetarianism and avoiding drugs and stimulants. They avoid taking out life insurance, are inclined to think of trade unions as evil, and limit their exposure to the media. Women eschew cosmetics, jewellery, and immodest attire.

There are today four Seventh-Day Adventist churches in Illawarra: Wollongong and Corrimal in the Sydney Conference, and Nowra and Oak Flats in the South NSW Conference. In October 1932 an Adventist Literature Evangelist convened a meeting of Adventists at Thirroul. The group held a Bible study in a private home before moving to the Thirroul School of Arts for Sabbath services. The first baptisms were in Towradgi Creek in June 1933 when seven members were baptised, five from Thirroul and two from Wollongong. 'Companies' were formed at Thirroul and Wollongong, and William Morris was appointed first resident pastor. Both grew and were organised into churches, and church buildings were opened at Wollongong in 1941 and Thirroul in 1943. The Thirroul church was transported from Liverpool and was paid for by a congregation augmented by a successful tent mission held in 1942. Similarly, a tent mission was held at Oak Flats in 1967, with Pastor

Bryce Andrews as missionary, and those who responded formed a company there. In 1968 they purchased a church building from the Lutherans at Oak Flats.

Churches of Christ

The Australian Churches of Christ have two parents: the British Churches of Christ and the American Disciples. Both movements are based on the teachings of Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander. Born in County Down in the North of Ireland in 1763, Thomas Campbell, the son of a Roman Catholic turned Anglican father and a Huguenot mother, was raised in Irish and Scottish Presbyterian churches which were then hopelessly divided. Peace-loving by temperament, Thomas longed for the unity of Christians, and in Britain and America where he arrived in 1807, he taught that non-Biblical traditions divide while faithfulness to the New Testament unites. His dictum was 'Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.' His supporters, drawn from different denominations, formed the Christian Association and adopted as its charter Campbell's *Declaration and Address* which has been described as 'one of the great milestones on the path of Christian unity'. Alexander succeeded Thomas as the teacher of the Association which crystallised into a movement and then - horrors - into yet other denominations, the Disciples in America and the Churches of Christ in Britain. Church historian, Roland Bainton, commented that Alexander Campbell 'has the singular distinction of being the only Christian reformer whose achievement was the denial of his intention'.

Churches of Christ practise believer's baptism by immersion, the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, the independence and autonomy of each local congregation, and the elimination of status-producing distinctions between ministers and people. The first full-time workers in the movement were itinerant evangelists, and evangelistic missions have been prominent in its history. Indeed, Wollongong Church of Christ was born with a bang during a mission.

The 'most spectacular and consistently successful evangelist in Australian Churches of Christ over a longer period than anyone else' was E.C. Hinrichsen. In his 35-year ministry 30,000 are said to have responded to his appeals. In his history of the Australian

Churches of Christ, Graeme Chapman, writes (*One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism*, 1979, p.112):

A novel feature of many Hinrichsen missions was the locating of the mission in an area where a handful of members met in a private home. During the period of the mission, up to 100 and sometimes 200 decisions for Christ were made, a building erected, and a full-time minister placed in charge of a church large enough to be self-supporting.

This is exactly what happened at Wollongong. Members of the Churches of Christ came to Illawarra as part of the general immigration to the steelworks in the late 1930s. Doug Main, for example, came to supervise the new coke ovens. He and his wife, Lil, held meetings in their home at Port Kembla and then transferred for a similar purpose to the home of Jack and Ev. Bignill in Gwynneville. One group member said,

We all met for Bible study, breaking of bread, prayers and fellowship, which we had all missed, coming from active Churches of Christ in various parts of Australia. We all felt we didn't want to, and didn't believe we should, be swallowed up in other churches and lose our identity.

This home fellowship group expanded and about 1939 began to hold monthly Gospel meetings in a Gwynneville Hall. Then they 'prayed, saved and worked to organise a tent mission' and invited as missionary E.C. Hinrichsen, then NSW Director of Evangelisation. The mission, from 25 March 1941, coincided with Japan's entry into the war. Never had the nation felt more imperilled. The mission tent was erected in Keira Street on the site of the present Regent Theatre and was frequently crowded, especially when Hinrichsen delivered one of his celebrated interpretations of prophecy. The mission converts numbered about 120, forming a solid congregation for a new church which went up with amazing speed during the 8-weeks mission and which was opened on 18 May 1941. It was self supporting from the beginning like all good Hinrichsen churches.

The congregation appears to have come from all social classes. Mr. Henlen, for example, was manager of Marcus Clarke's variety store. Mrs. Henlen was a stylish dresser and immortalised her memory when, on pulling aside the curtain to allow a baptismal candidate to go down the steps, she fell backwards into the water. I like to imagine

that she was rescued by Mr. Drinkwater who was converted at the pit face of a coal mine. He was not troubled with inhibitions and regularly repeated the chorus of a hymn after it had finished. He shared the habit, now lapsed, of murmuring 'amen' and 'hallelujah' during the preaching. Revivalism continued to feature in the new denomination. Further tent missions were held in 1943 and 1944 whenever the vitality of the church began to fade or the number of baptisms dropped off. But the Lord was wearying of these riotous assemblies and, at the 1944 mission, blew the tent away after only eight conversions.

Evangelistic fare continued to supply the main course during the church's first decade, however, for among early ministers were the denomination's two leading evangelists, Lloyd E. Jones and Hinrichsen, himself. The impact of Hinrichsen's ministry (1950-54) was diluted by frequent and ever longer absences. But when preaching, especially on prophecy, he attracted large crowds, and many made decisions for Christ at Gospel services. Hinrichsen also encouraged people in the custom of walking to the front of the church as an act of re consecration. 'If you come', declared Hinrichsen, 'you might lead someone else'.

Wollongong Church of Christ established off-shoots at Bowral in 1945, Warrawong in 1949, Dapto in 1968 and Nowra in 1969, all of which have developed into independent churches.

(On Churches of Christ, see Chapman, *op.cit.*, E.L. Williams, *Churches of Christ - An Interpretation*, 1980; V. Phillips, *The Mustard Seed*, 1980).

Lutheranism in Illawarra

The tensions of post-war Illawarra society are nowhere better seen than in the Lutheran church. Australian Lutheranism dates back to the late 1830s, and the majority of Australian Lutheran churches have been long-established, the religious manifestation of a rural enclave such as in South Australia or in the eastern Riverina around Walla and Jindera. In Illawarra, however, Lutheranism is a new and tiny boat on a seething, multicultural, industrial sea. Illawarra Lutheran churches have been adopted as mission areas by the older churches, thus keeping the boat afloat. Wollongong Lutheran

parish did not become financially independent until 1973, while Illawarra parish centring on Holy Cross Church, Oak Flats, is still dependent on financial aid.

The first known Lutheran service in Illawarra was held on 22 December 1946 by Pastor A. Miller of Bankstown. A surge of immigrants from the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) in 1950 brought a considerable increase in the Lutheran population. Illawarra Lutherans also came from Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Hungary. Pastors travelled from Sydney and Canberra to conduct services for migrants, a work continued well after the appointment of the first resident pastor in 1954 for he spoke only German and English.

Pastor Traeger's ministry (1954-8) typifies the difficulties facing the migrant churches. Services and Sunday schools were held in homes, hostels, halls and churches of other denominations in 12 centres located between Wombarra in the north and Windang in the south. Traeger, who lived in a rented Housing Commission home in Berkeley, helped place migrants in employment through his close links with the personnel departments of AI&S and Lysaght's. He also helped rehabilitate offenders brought before the courts and accepted personal custody of many of them, both adults and children. Worn out with overwork, his health broke down, and the congregation was racked with dissension. He would have been asked to resign had not ill-health forced him to depart early in 1958.

His successor was Pastor Berthold Halbich (1959-68) who was later able to report that the Lord sustained him and blessed his work. Among those who assisted him were deaconess Erva Mücke who co-ordinated the Sunday School work and Pastor Norm Minge who taught 400 pupils a week in Religious Instruction classes. Halbich made 500 home visits in some years and also gave German lessons at the Workers' Educational Association. He also resigned due to ill health.

The sheer volume of work was not the only problem. The human material with which the pastors worked was almost beyond help. Many Lutheran migrants had vivid memories of appalling suffering during the war, longed to be reunited with relatives only to be frustrated by Soviet authorities, and found Australian society

inhospitable. A Finnish Lutheran, Mrs. Risku, who has been actively involved in the Finnish-speaking Lutheran Ladies' Guild for more than 20 years, comments that there is no cure for the homesickness felt by some migrants: 'you have to cry it out of your system'. Her personal needs have constrained her to be far more involved in the Lutheran church in Illawarra than ever she was in Finland. A Lithuanian Lutheran, Mrs. Ruth Mataitis, endured the rigours of a German refugee camp before arriving in 1949 in Australia where she was stationed at the migrant hostel near Albury. Although a Lutheran pastor made contact with her there, she thinks the Australian Lutheran church has come to regret that it did not do more for migrants. 'People from war-torn Europe were so desperately in need of all sorts of spiritual and psychological guidance'. At the age of 16 she married a Lithuanian who had been tortured during the war. The Lutheran church has become the centre of their existence largely because they felt rejected by the rest of the community. There they were accepted, and Mrs. Mataitis is now a pillar of the church, serving on countless committees. But church membership has not been all gain. Mr. Mataitis felt rejected by his fellow workers, first, because he was a migrant and second because he was a Christian.

Lutheranism's birth in Illawarra has been a painful one, then, and its nurture has been accompanied by many tears. Ahead, as we shall see, lay an awkward adolescence. But behind the babel of numerous tongues and the clash of cultures and personalities has been the objective personality of Christ who speaks man's *lingua franca*, the language of the heart. Through the Lutheran church in Illawarra, Christ has redeemed many suffering bodies and tormented souls.

(See *Power through the Spirit*, 1980 - a history of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wollongong, and *Holy Cross Lutheran Church Oak Flats - 25th Anniversary*, 1983).

The Reformed Church of Wollongong

As with Lutheranism, the Reformed Church popularly known as Dutch Reformed, is a confessional Evangelical church, but unlike the Illawarra Lutheran church, the Reformed Church's beginnings in Wollongong date from the commencement of the denomination. The Reformed Churches of Australia were constituted on 16 December

1951 when 147 members, including 24 from Wollongong, signed a 'protocol' at the Sydney YMCA. The protocol expressed the following sentiment:

Wherever possible in New South Wales, we will endeavour to promote the establishment of similar congregations, and we will seek Christian fellowship with all those who love our Saviour Jesus Christ and who are willing to base themselves upon the foundation of His word, according to the old Standards of the Reformation. By adopting more and more the English language in public worship, we will endeavour to become a real Australian Church as soon as possible.

The Reformed Church in Holland represents 5-10% of the population. Migrants from the denomination were advised to join Free Presbyterian churches in NSW whenever possible since these were considered to preserve most closely a Calvinistic heritage. In early post-war Wollongong, services in Dutch were held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian church. After closer acquaintance with Australian churches, such migrants came to the 'painful conclusion' that for conscience's sake, they could not join any Australian churches: the Word of God was not always preached faithfully, the sacraments of communion and baptism were administered indiscriminately, and discipline was lax.



Wollongong Reformed Church.

In May 1951 the Rev. J. Van der Bom arrived in Australia and presided over the denomination's inauguration. The Wollongong group purchased land as a church site in 1952, and became an independent church the following year. Van der Bom preached as often as possible at Wollongong Services, then all in Dutch. He had worked as an evangelist in the slums of Amsterdam, and spoke passionately against the temptation to view migrants and other workers as 'all factory fodder for the steelworks'. With the appointment in 1954 of A.I. de Graaf as first resident pastor of Wollongong, the bold decision was made to hold one service in English every two months. After four months' trial some members threatened to leave: there was too much English; 90% of the congregation could not understand English. Just six years later, however, with the appointment of the Rev. Jac Jonker, it was decided to hold all services in English with the exception of special guest services.

The determination to become 'an Australian church' as soon as possible did not militate against the sensitivity of the congregation to the needs of migrants to whom assistance was offered in their search for accommodation and employment. In 1958 the Reformed Churches founded SPOCO, a company which helped Dutch migrants through the purchase of cheap land and houses. SPOCO's secretary was Max Tenhave, who later moved to Wollongong and was a member of the Good Neighbour Council. In 1978 the church supported the Refugee Support Scheme established by a Wollongong Catholic priest. Jack Postma, then minister, and his wife, Maureen, took a Vietnamese refugee into their own home. The Baptists, too, responded practically to the needs of the Vietnamese, providing translation and other services.

Unlike the Lutheran churches, there is no evidence of decline in the Wollongong Reformed Church. Its membership has remained remarkably stable at just over 300 since the mid-1960s. The continued strength of the church has been attributed to effective discipline. Illawarra is divided into four regions, for each of which two elders are responsible. They visit each member at least once a year, check on those who have not been at church for some weeks, and visit the sick and elderly more frequently. There is some evidence of ageing in the congregation, although the success of immigrant parents in passing on their faith to their children appears to have been high. The prayer which they offered so earnestly in 1951 when they estab-

lished the denomination has been wonderfully answered: 'May God preserve us and our children from straying away from the faith once delivered to the saints'. Like the Lutheran churches, the Reformed churches are conservative, maintaining the theological and doctrinal stance of the Dutch Reformed Church of the early 1950s. Newly-arrived Dutch ministers must undergo examination of their orthodoxy before they are allowed to preach in an Australian church. Theological conservatism, however, has tended to strengthen and sustain the congregation rather than weaken it. Theological conservatism coupled with social flexibility appear to be features of most successful Illawarra churches.

(See R. van der Noord, *Reformed Churches in N.S.W., 1957-1976*, 1977; A. Moerman, *The Early History of the Reformed Church of Wollongong*, 1975).

CHAPTER NINE

CRISIS AND RENEWAL: THE CHURCHES

IN A SECULAR AGE

1962 – 1981

TABLE OF EVENTS

1962 – 1981

1962

Second Vatican Council - ends 1965.

- 1 January* - *C of E in Australia adopted its own constitution - now an independent autonomous church 'in communion with the Church of England in England'*
- 27 October* - *Opening of Chesalon (C of E Home for the Aged) Woonona,*
- 1 July* - *Warrilla-Shedharbour C of E parish constituted.*
- 25 January* - *Laying of foundation stone of Our Lady of Lourdes RC Church, Wombarra, built in brick.*
- 11 February* - *New St. Joseph's School Bulli (RC) opened.*
- 26 August* - *St. Paul's RC Boys School, Belkumbi, opened (Marist Bros.)*
- 16 December* - *St. Luke's Lutheran Church hall, Oak Flats, dedicated (ELCA)*
- Greek Orthodox Church of Holy Cross, Wollongong, consecrated*

1963

Commonwealth grants to non-government schools introduced.

WIN 4 TV opened

- 16 March* - *Life Line Centre opened in Sydney.*
- 26 August* - *Home Mission Society Opportunity Shop (C of E) opened in old fire station, Wollongong.*
- August* - *East Woonona C of E Church hall opened*
- 30 November* - *New St. Mark's C of E, West Wollongong, opened.*

- 5 January - Berkeley RC Parish separated from Unanderra
 St John's RC School, Dapto, began to provide secondary schooling.
 28 December - New Kuma RC Church opened.
 7 September - Williams Memorial Presbyterian Church, Thirroul,
 dedicated.
 Lutherans divided into Wollongong and Illawarra parishes.

1964

- 1 April - Provisional District of St. Paul's, Fairy Meadow,
 with Mt. Ousley and Balgownie separated from
 Corrimal Parish (C of E).
 Albion Park Rail Wesley Methodist church opened.
 Congregational Manse, Gerringong, converted into a Youth Centre
 (Nestor House).
 Barrack Heights Congregational Church affiliated with the Congrega-
 tional Union.
 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Oak Flats (UELCA) dedicated
 July - Unanderra Salvation Army opened.
 Tarrawanna Salvation Army opened.
 25 April - St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Berkeley, dedicated.

1965

- 9 November - Four die in Bulli Mine fire.
 5 - 31 October - South Coast Crusade - Gene Jeffries, evangelist.
 17 October - Holy Redeemer (C of E) Helensburgh, consecrated.
 31 October - St. Mary's RC Church, Berkeley, opened.
 7 February - St. Anne's College, Dapto, opened (RC).
 'Spiritual Life Mission' held at Wollongong Lutheran church.

1966

Marcus Loane appointed Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

30 October - Union of Evangelical Lutherans and United Evangelical Lutherans in Australia.

New Carrimal Methodist Church opened.

4 June - Dapto Baptist Church constituted.

25 June - Olinda Hostel for men in Bourke St, Wollangong, opened by Baptist Church.

9 July - Warilla Baptist Church opened.

7 November - Salvation Army Warilla outpost hall opened.

18 June - Renovated Coniston United Church dedicated.

1967

Revised services introduced to the Church of England.

Union of Lutheran Churches in Australia.

St. Luke's Retirement Village, Dapto, opened (C of E).

Closure of St. Michael's RC High School, Nowra.

Bushland Chapel opened as new Methodist Church, Helensburgh.

Thirroul Rest Home (Church of Christ) opened.

Dapto Church of Christ constituted.

1968

Second Sydney Billy Graham Crusade.

October - Worst bushfire in Illawarra's recorded history - fire ravaged from Coledale to Mt. Kembla.

Anglican Synod resolved that a diocese of Wollangong should be established in ten years.

- 1 July* - *St. Andrew's, Oak Flats, became an independent Provisional District (C of E).*

Corrimal Catholic School completed (2nd stage)

Woonona Baptist Church opens a new three-storey education centre.

Oak Flats Seventh-Day Adventist church opened.

- 5 May* - *Second St John's Lutheran Church, Wollongong, opened.*

- 19 May* - *Warilla Lutheran parish formed.*

1969

- May* - *Bishop G. Delbridge appointed first Anglican Bishop in Wollongong*

- May* - *Closure of St. Paul's, Cringilla (declining Anglican population)*

- 4 July* - *Figtree Presbyterian church/hall opened.*

- 1 March* - *Life Line established.*

1970

- 23 May* - *Methodist Fellowship Centre, Kiama, opened*

- 28 November* - *Christian Revival Crusade opened in old Presbyterian Church, Rosemont St.*

1971

Cardinal James Freeman appointed Catholic Archbishop of Sydney.

- 11 October* - *St. Paul's C of E Fairy Meadow received full parish status*

- 26 September* - *Mt. Kembla Presbyterian church closed.*

- 12 December* - *Thirroul Lutheran chapel dedicated.*

- 11 December* - *Reformed Church, Fairymeadow, completed.*

1972

1 November - Figtree C of E becomes a Parish.

St. Aidan's C of E, South Dapto (Mount Brown), opened.

Services terminated at Wongawilli C of E Church hall

17 June - Baptist Education complex Wollongong opened

3 June - Coromal Seventh Day Adventist church opened (relocated from Thirroul).

19 November - Dedication of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Warilla

1973

11 February - Third (and present) St. John's C of E, Keiraville, opened.

1974

St. John's C of E, Keiraville, achieved full parish status.

Warilla RC Parish created.

19 May - Helensburgh Salvation Army opened - outpost of Woonona

November - Dapto Salvation Army opened - outpost of Unanderra.

6 October - Reformed Church services commenced at Oak Flats

1975

April - Rev. Kenneth Short appointed Bishop (C of E) in Wollongong

21 July - Consecration of William Edward Murray as Bishop of Wollongong (RC)

25 January - New St. Paul's RC Church, Albion Park, opened

22 June - Towradgi and Fairy Meadow Congregational Church fellowship founded - Fairy Meadow fellowship leased its property to the Berean Baptist Fellowship.

September - Port Kembla Salvation Army Citadel opened.

1976

12 December - International Centre blessed and opened.

August - St. Vincent de Paul Centre opened at Oak Flats - the 150th Centre in Australia.

19 September - St Peter's Lutheran Chapel, Dapto, dedicated.

1977

22 June - Inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Formation of provisional Parish of Helensburgh with Stanwell Park (C of E)

1978

An Australian Prayer Book (C of E) first published.

Sale of East Woonona (C of E) church hall.

Okunda Nursing Home purchased by the St. Andrew's Presbyterian congregation

28 February - Spanish Fellowship at Wollongong Baptist Church recongnized by the Baptist Union of NSW

12 November - Warilla Lutheran congregation joined Oak Flats

1979

March - Opening of Berkeley Retirement Village (RC).

Extension to the Uniting Church at Shellharbour

- 30 November - Warilla and Oak Flats Lutheran congregations combined to form Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Oak Flats.*
- 16 August - Services discontinued at St. Thomas' Lutheran Church, Thirroul.*
- 4 February - Greek Cultural Centre opened.*

1980

- 24 May - Opening of new Salvation Army complex at Wollongong.*

1981

Mayflower Retirement Village (Uniting Church) opened.

- 2 May - Church of Christ Worship Centre, Wollongong, opened*
- December - Tarravanna Salvation Army (Fairy Meadow) citadel opened.*

Illawarra Family Life Centre of the Apostolic Church of Australia (Pentecostal) opened at Berkeley.

Wollongong's post-World War II metamorphosis had provided the churches with the sort of challenge for which they were best prepared. All the major denominations were growth-orientated, and the population explosion allowed plenty of scope for heroic expansionary and evangelistic endeavour. That explosion exhausted itself by the beginning of the period now under review. The rate of population growth in Illawarra which had been running at over 6% per annum in the years 1947 to 1961, slowed to 2% per annum in the 60s and less than 1% in the 70s.

1. SECULARISATION

What might have been a sedate period of consolidation for the churches quickly developed into the most tempestuous decades in their history as the winds of change swept away much that was old and swept in unimagined developments. Among these, easily the most threatening development has been labelled 'secularisation'. It appears the more sinister because it has proved difficult to define and even more difficult to chart. It is loosely equated with an increase in irreligion and a decline in the social significance of religious institutions and is said to be the inevitable outcome of industrialisation and urbanisation. Census statistics of nominal religious adherence are one indicator of decline. They show an alarming downward trend between 1966 and 1981.

TABLE XII

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION

	1966 Census	1981 Census
Total Christians		
Australia	88.2	76.4
Illawarra	89.1	79.9
No Religion		
Australia	0.8	10.8
Illawarra	0.1	8.3

It is perhaps suggestive that one of the most highly industrialised

parts of Australia is significantly above the national average in the percentage of nominal Christian adherents, but even here the change from 1966 suggests the fastest ever decline in religious profession.

There are no statistics on the total number of people in Illawarra who attend church each Sunday, but the Australia-wide figure is about one-quarter of the population (22% in 1981). This figure has barely altered since 1860. Available membership figures show a general decline in most denominations until 1976 followed by a reversal of that trend to the present day. Sociologists disagree on the significance of this data. Some argue for a massive and irreversible decline, even if it has temporarily slowed, while others argue that, as has happened on numerous occasions in the last 2,000 years, the Church has been written off prematurely. Bouma concludes: 'it is impossible to say that decline is the order of the day. The notion that the churches are withering away is simply not supported by the data' (A. Black and P. Glasner (eds.), *Practice and Belief: Studies in the sociology of Australian religion*, 1983, p.24. See also B. Wilson, *Can God survive in Australia?*, 1983).

With greater confidence we can identify a move away from many traditional religious practices. Though Port Kembla is the only Illawarra Anglican parish easily identified as threatened with decline, though not extinction (the parish is peopled increasingly with non-Anglican migrants, 100 Anglican families moved out of the parish in the 14 months to December, 1962), all Anglican parishes show a fall in the number of baptisms and confirmations since the mid-60s. The same is probably true of Catholic churches where confessions and membership of devotional societies such as sodalities have also declined. It is another matter, however, to attribute such decline to secularisation, for other winds have been blowing through the churches

'The wind blows where it wills'

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Catholics have experienced the greatest liturgical revolution in the Church's history. Together with other changes, the Council precipitated a crisis of identity as a Church, thought by most to be fixed for all time by the Council of Trent (1545-63), suddenly erupted like a volcano, covering the world with light and heat as well as smoke

and ashes. With greater deliberation, Australian Anglicanism also experimented with liturgical revision and in 1978 introduced *An Australian Prayer Book* which, though intended to supplement the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, quickly supplanted it.

Yet another wind of change was ecumensim. Sectarianism between Catholics and Protestants, hitherto endemic to Australian history, was blown away with the advent of state aid for Catholic schools and the ecumenical tolerance endorsed by Vatican II. In 1977 the Uniting Church was formed, the first genuine interdenominational union, made up of all Methodists, most Congregationalists, and some Presbyterians.

Complicating all these developments and, at times seeming to make them all irrelevant with its surpassing vitality, was the Charismatic movement. The older denominations were shaken thoroughly by it, while its institutionalised expression, the Pentecostal churches, sprung into life and grew vigorously.

2. TOWARDS THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

With the appointment in 1960 of Canon Basil Williams as rector of St. Michael's and Rural Dean of Wollongong, the campaign for a new Anglican Diocese of Wollongong gained momentum. It would be the first diocese established in NSW since Grafton in 1914. The formation of a diocese had been foreseen by Pat Walker, rector of St. Michael's from 1924 to 1941, during the heady 1920s:

Wollongong! Who would not like to have some part in the growth and development of this wonderful district! It does not matter how it is viewed, the seeds of real greatness are there. As a specimen of architecture, St. Michael's has nothing to surpass it in Wollongong and it will form the nucleus of what in the future will be a Cathedral in the see town of the Diocese of Illawarra (*Sydney Diocesan Magazine*, December 1929, p.156).

The matter was discussed by St. Michael's parish council in May 1944, two years after Wollongong had been proclaimed a city; it was feared that civic development was outstripping the ecclesiastical. In 1951, as we have seen, following the appointment of the first Catholic bishop, the Parish Council raised the matter again and resolved to ask the 'proper authorities' to appoint a bishop. Canon Williams'

advocacy of a new Diocese in the 1960s was more sustained and purposeful. He realised that Wollongong had special needs and opportunities peculiar to itself, and it irked him that so little time was devoted to the area by Sydney-based diocesan authorities.

At the 1963 Anglican Synod, Hugh Gough, Archbishop of Sydney from 1958 to 1966, an experienced administrator, counselled against the precipitate formation of a diocese lacking funds and manpower. The same point was made by his successor, Marcus Loane, Archbishop of Sydney from 1966 to 1982. At the official welcome to the new Archbishop, civic authorities first appealed to his great love for history by quoting D'Arcy-Irvine's poem, 'Illawarra', cited in chapter one of this book, and then strongly pressed him to establish a new diocese. He recovered sufficiently to address the issue with calm deliberation in his 1966 Synod charge:

The first object in such matters must be to ascertain what will be the best for the Church as a whole; whether in fact such a plan will make the impact of the ... Gospel more relevant, more effective and more durable ... No one would be willing to see a Cinderella Diocese brought into being; premature division would be unwise and reckless.

Some synodsmen expressed the fear that the new diocese would be chronically poor with insufficient parishes to make it viable. Others feared it would lose its Evangelical character as has been the fate of other dioceses cut off from Sydney. Nevertheless, Synod appointed a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice Richardson. Coming at the end of Wollongong's growth spurt the Commission had a more optimistic view of Illawarra's potential - a population of 378,000 by 1980 - than has been realised. It recommended to the 1968 Synod that St. Michael's be made a Provisional Cathedral and a resident bishop be appointed to Wollongong which was to be made a separate diocese in ten years' time.

Wollongong Anglican bishops

Graham R. Delbridge was appointed first Bishop in Wollongong in 1969. He and Justice Richardson spoke at dinners held at Dapto, Corrimal, and Menangle to explain plans for the formation of a new diocese. At Corrimal Justice Richardson insensured some with the argument that the diocese would be supported 'if you care about the future of your children'. This put his listeners into something of a

cleft stick: it was partly to avoid any more such displays of Sydney paternalism that the diocese was desirable, but here the paternalist was advocating the new diocese. Bishop Delbridge, consummate diplomat, rescued the endangered judge, but he let it be known that his commitment to the formation of the new diocese was total. He worked indefatigably for it, building bridges to community leaders and organisations as no other Anglican clergyman in Wollongong before or since.

The bishop numbered among his personal friends captains of industry, trade union leaders, lord mayors, academics, legal and medical officers and media men. When he accepted the position of Bishop of Gippsland in 1974, John Martin, news director of WIN 4 TV, responded, 'Send the telex message in a black border ... that's a terrible thing for Wollongong ... he knows the city; he knows the people; he knows the unions; he knows the media. It will be a terrible loss.' The bishop's departure was front-page news in the *Nowarra Mercury* for 27 January 1975. He challenged the people of Wollongong to work wholeheartedly together for a new diocese or they would lose it.



Bishop Kenneth Short and family.

His successor, Kenneth Short, Bishop in Wollongong from 1975 to 1982, changed the subject - debate on the new diocese was too

divisive. Ken Short was a strong leader with the head of an administrator and heart of an evangelist. He was the focus of Anglican regional activities, especially missions, and helped all committed Anglican laity to feel part of the one family. It was the clearly expressed judgment of the majority of the family in 1978 that the projected diocese, though desirable, was not yet viable. In 1982, following the appointment of Wollongong's third Anglican bishop, R.H. Goodhew, Synod postponed further consideration of the creation of a new diocese until 1992. Many had lent their enthusiastic support to the movement for a new diocese, but there was no general disenchantment when it was decided to experiment with regionalisation rather than to proceed with diocesanisation.

3. POST-VATICAN II CATHOLICISM IN ILLAWARRA

In calling a general council (Vatican II), Pope John XXIII was determined to bring change to the over-institutionalised and over-defensive Catholic Church. The Council's recommendation for change in the Church, incorporated in the decree, 'The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church', was based on 8972 proposals from all around the world. Decisive however was John XXIII's own insight that the church must show itself as the source of light and unity, and that its resources should be within reach of the whole human family. Hence the Constitution was labelled 'Lumen Gentium', and Catholicity was now defined as 'the fulness of the grace of Christ for the fulness of creation through the Church'.

Catholic Worship, 1960 and 1970

In achieving that 'reorientation to the outside world' now considered essential for the mission of 'the people of God', the rich tapestry of devotional practice, hallowed by the usage of centuries, was first rent, then discarded.

A Catholic in 1960 was an adherent of an ancient cult. The mark of a 'practical' Catholic was attendance at Mass each Sunday. The ritual made use of Latin in a format substantially unchanged since 1570. The priest said the liturgy with his back to the people. What words were spoken aloud were uttered by the celebrant in an unintelligible monotone devoid of emotional input. During Mass many people attended to their private devotions based on the rosary

or prayer books such as *Key of Heaven* or *St. Anthony's Treasury*. Bells were rung to attract attention at high points in the liturgy.

Once a month the faithful Catholic would attend Mass with other members of a Sodality: the Holy Name Society for men and youths; the Sacred Heart Sodality for married women; and the Children of Mary for unmarried females, dressed in blue cloaks and white veils. Distinctive badges were worn, banners decorated each pew, and attendance rolls were kept.

Devotion to the Real Presence (the doctrine that Jesus is really present in the consecrated bread or host kept in the tabernacle of the Church) was expressed by 'paying a visit' when passing a Church and praying to God, 'the Blessed Eucharist'. On Sunday nights and special occasions the host was displayed in a gold and jewelled holder known as a 'monstrance' and the congregation blessed with it (hence this service was known as 'Benediction'). Once a year every parish exposed the host for 40 hours on a lavishly decorated altar with rosters of worshippers drawn up to ensure that it was never unattended. On the annual feast of Corpus Christi (the Body of Christ) the Real Presence was honoured by the carrying of the host through the streets near St. Francis Xavier's, Wollongong, accompanied by hundreds of Catholics in school and sodality uniforms.



St. Francis Xavier's before Vatican II.



A statue of the Virgin Mary is carried in procession around Market Square in Wollongong, June 1983.

A diversity of Saint's feasts and devotions supplemented these major practices. Attendance at Mass on nine consecutive first Fridays would be rewarded by remission of time in Purgatory as would similar attendance on five first Saturdays. The Perpetual Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour was a round of nine evenings of emotional hymns and prayers to Mary in the visual form of an icon, the original of which is in Rome.

The liturgical reforms of Vatican II changed all that. A Catholic in 1970 attended an English Mass which compelled participation and mostly included singing. Without any official action, the old practices ceased. The only substitute for them was participation in the Mass, through which Catholics were meant to satisfy all their impulse to worship. The revised Missal gave scope for variety in presentation by the priest, and physical as well as vocal involvement by the laity, who could read the lessons, assist the priest at the altar, or distribute Communion. These changes signify that the worship of the whole

people of God must be intelligible, and that daily living may also be worship. Special devotions evaporated.

Coping with Change

In 1976 over 200 lay Catholics attended the Wollongong Diocesan Conference of the Catholic Laity, itself an expression of Vatican II's recognition of the role of the laity in 'the people of God'. Comments on questionnaires distributed in churches before the Conference reveal something of how Catholics were coping with the revolution:

'Why so much change in the Mass?'

'Give us back our Latin Mass'

'Deterioration of traditional devotion within the Church and the apparent full co-operation of most Bishops in accepting new — devotions which in most cases leads to further deterioration'

'More explanation of liturgy'

'Even further involvement of congregation in the liturgy'.

Many wanted to go back; others wanted more help in going forward. There is little doubt that the changes were implemented far too quickly and insensitively.

A study of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Berkeley, an interesting parish since it was started during Vatican II, reveals that conservative priests and conservative people delayed the implementation of the changes as long as possible. Its two longest-serving priests, B.D. Branley (1964-1970) and P. Ryan (1971-1978), were exceptionally capable priests who established in the new parish the traditional machinery and organisations as if Vatican II were little more than a hiccup. The first discussion of changes in the Mass recorded in the Parish Minutes was on 15 April 1970. It was decided to make no change pending the arrival of the new Missal. Lay Readership was commenced in 1972, later than any other parish in the diocese, and even then only because it was obligatory. A proposal to receive Communion standing was repeatedly deferred in favour of the traditional kneeling. Ryan's successor, Peter Comensoli, appears to have administered the parish without overly-involving the laity.

which was also contrary to the spirit of Vatican II. He more than compensated for this, however, by elevating the Mass to such heights of splendour and magnificence that even some 'separated Brethren', as non-Catholics were now called, attended to witness same. Father Adrian Van Klooster, appointed in 1981, sought to implement the best of Vatican II. He decreed that he just could not function without a parish council: he strongly believed in the value of consensus in decision-making and the role of the laity in the Church's pastoral work. St. Mary's, Berkeley, then, is one parish where Vatican II has not destroyed more than it has fulfilled.

The Catholic Campaign for State Aid

In the successful campaign for state aid in the 1960s, Illawarra Catholics played a leading part. It was the laity who won the day, a coincidental justification of the determination of Vatican II to invest them with greater powers. NSW bishops, in maintaining their traditional support for the ALP which after 1957 had hardened in its opposition to state aid, were seen as politically inept by the laity. As David Nelson, Wollongong solicitor, later commented, 'The bishops had run a lousy campaign for 90 years and we weren't going to let them spoil this one if we could help it'.

By 1960 the Catholic school system was in crisis, owing mainly to the dramatic post-war rise in the Catholic population and the rapidly rising cost per child of education. Prime Minister Menzies, perceiving a decline in sectarianism, began to woo the Catholic vote with taxation deductions for educational expenses, donations to school building funds, and interest concessions. Catholic parents, whose children were being educated in classes of up to 80 pupils, were galvanised into militancy, and condemned Menzies' concessions as tokenism. They were not requesting aid, they thundered, but simple justice under the United Nations Charter of Human Rights. In July 1962 Goulburn Catholics closed their schools and attempted to enrol their children in state schools. The following October the Illawarra Association of Educational Freedom (AEF) was formed largely through the efforts of Gino Fogliati, a Catholic industrial chemist from West Wollongong parish.

The early executive consisted of Fogliati, David Nelson and Alan Hogan (both solicitors), William Feneley (doctor), Philip

Morrissey (chemist), John O'Driscoll and Janet Morrissey (teachers), Bryce Fraser (systems analyst), and Kathleen Murphy (nurse). Within a year the organisation had 750 financial members and branches at Albion Park, Berrima, Camden, Campbelltown, Dapto, Helensburgh, Wollongong, Moruya, Nowra and Robertson. The Wollongong AEF published a newspaper which became the organ of the whole NSW movement. At the first state conference of the AEF, in September 1963, Fogliati, Feneley and Nelson were elected to the NSW executive. Politically, the AEF pursued a bi-partisan policy. The 1963 ALP Federal Conference was a disappointment to its old supporter, Bishop Carroll of Sydney, and the NSW ALP reneged on promises of aid for science laboratories. Menzies, on the contrary, promised substantial state aid, and the AEF had good connections in the Liberal Party. In the 1963 elections, Menzies won decisively; Labor's NSW performance was poor. The Illawarra Catholic laity had tasted victory. The impact on Catholic schooling would be profound. In 1963 there were four religious teachers to every lay teacher, by 1973 there were 3 lay teachers to every 2 religious. (See M.C. Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid*, 1978).

The election of a new Bishop

The crisis of authority in post-Vatican II Catholicism was well illustrated by events preceding the appointment of William Edward Murray as second Bishop of Wollongong. In May 1974 Bishop McCabe retired, and Mgr. O'Reilly, parish priest of Bulli, was elected Vicar Capitular. Pending the appointment of a new bishop by the Pope, the Vicar Capitular carries out the normal day-to-day administration of the diocese.

The processes leading to the papal appointment were changed in consequence of Vatican II's resolve to increase lay involvement. According to 'Norms for the selection of candidates for the Episcopal Ministry in the Latin Church', promulgated in 1972, the laity, 'especially through their canonically established representative bodies' were to be consulted, and their recommendations, should they so wish, were to be sent direct to Rome.

In the Diocese of Wollongong no canonically established bodies of laity existed to be consulted by the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Australia (Papal Ambassador), but members of the Christian Family

Movement (CFM) having heard rumours of McCabe's retirement, resolved at its meeting of 10 March 1974 to raise the matter with the Pro-Nuncio. Considerable interaction ensued as the Pro-Nuncio was clearly grateful for the group's help. Other groups of priests and laity followed the CFM's lead and were also well received. The migrant and industrial nature of the region and its schooling needs were all made clear to the Pro-Nuncio as being factors relevant to the appointment of a suitable bishop.

On Pentecost Sunday 1974 (2 June) the Vicar Capitalar issued a strongly worded condemnation of such negotiation. His pastoral letter cited the 1917 Canon Law and did not mention the 1972 'Norms'. It condemned 'actions savouring of the hustings' and 'pressure group tactics'. All through the following week, the *Illawarra Mercury* featured articles and letters on the subject under such emotive headlines as:

'Church uproar - pressure tactics warning'

'Secret moves spark stir in church'

'Faction wants swinging bishop'.

There is no doubt that a small number of Catholic laity were 'activists' and that they did want a 'swinging' bishop. They were, however, self-critical, and had no wish to displace clericalism with lay elitism. They also subsequently acknowledged that maybe they had not always known what was best for the Church, for while one of their nominees did become bishop of another diocese, two others left the priesthood altogether. Since wisdom is not acquired easily, power should not be sought hastily.

4. CHURCH UNION – THE UNITING CHURCH

On 22 June 1977 the Uniting Church of Australia was formed, a merger of Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches. The union was the culmination of negotiations dating back to 1901. It was the first genuinely cross-denominational union achieved in Australian history, and the new Church was described by one of its spokesmen as 'the first distinctively Australian Church.' The secretary of the Illawarra Uniting Church Provisional Presbytery, the Rev. Max Fox, minister of Thurroul Presbyterian Church, put the ultimate

justification for the union as 'the will of Christ that people should dwell in unity in order that the world may believe in Christ'.

The structure of the Methodist Church of Australasia enabled its General Conference, on the basis of approval for the union by 85% of its members, to take all Methodist congregations and property into the Uniting Church. Congregational and Presbyterian congregations did not join, however, unless two-thirds of their membership voted to do so. For Australia as a whole, 85% of Congregational and 67% of Presbyterian churches joined the Union. Most of the Congregational Churches staying out of the Union were in NSW, and similarly NSW had the highest percentage (54) of continuing Presbyterian churches. In Illawarra only 50% of churches of both denominations joined the Union.

TABLE XIII

ILLAWARRA PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND THE UNITING CHURCH

Churches joining	Churches continuing
	Presbyterian
Albion Park	Berry
Balgownie	Jamberoo
Corrimal	Kiama and
Dapto	Shellharbour
Figtree	Nowra
Port Kembla	Unanderra
Thirroul	Wollongong
	Woonona
	Congregational
Barrack Heights	Towradgi-Fairy Meadow
Gerringong	Wollongong

Sociologists of religion have been unable to agree on any single factor to account for the movement towards the reunification of the Church in the present century. Some maintain that it is a response to the secularisation of society, reflected in a decline of membership;

union is an attempt to achieve 'lateral' growth in the absence of 'frontal' growth. It is tempting to see this as a factor in the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia as the absolute numbers of Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists in the census fell for the first time between 1966 and 1971. The hypothesis is unlikely to be correct, however, since the momentum to union was well under way before 1971 when the decline became evident, and there was no correlation between those congregations which joined the Uniting church and those most evidently in decline.

The continuing churches

The most important factor influencing the decision of a congregation on the union question was the conviction of its minister. Ivan Cox, Wollongong's Presbyterian minister, was one of Australia's leading champions of the continuing Presbyterian Church. Together with two other clergy, he invited those interested in continuing as Presbyterians to a meeting in North Sydney. Over 200 attended, forming the Planning Committee of the continuing Presbyterian Church. They played the 'numbers game' lobbying for as many seats as possible in the General Assembly of the Australian Presbyterian Church. In the final vote union carried the day with only 8 votes. Ivan Cox carried the battle to Illawarra, where it stirred such deep emotions that the media took up the issue under such headlines as 'Unity Proposal Splits Church' and 'Church Unity plans leave many bitter'. Not only did as many parishes come out against union as for it, but two parishes were split down the middle. The congregation at Figtree who wanted to go into union were blocked by the smaller Unanderra congregation who wanted to continue. The Figtree congregation petitioned successfully and had the decision reversed. The Presbyterian minister at Dapto-Albion Park was staunchly unionist, but he was one who could not prevail over all his congregations. Albion Park voted to continue, provoking the minister to roll up the carpet and remove the communion vessels and Bible with the words, 'If the Uniting Church can't have them, the Presbyterians won't either'. He returned them when he cooled down. Feeling ran so deep that some Presbyterian women have confessed that it has taken them years to recover their previously excellent relations with the women of Wesley Church, now Uniting.

Ivan Cox, who died in 1981, appears to have opposed union

chiefly on doctrinal grounds. The union 'downgraded the doctrine of the church', he declared. Biblical inspiration was the main problem. In its basis the Uniting Church says that 'the church has received the books of the Old and New Testament as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which she hears the Word of God'. 'Shakespeare is unique too', retorted Cox. David Bartlett, minister of Wollongong Congregational Church, which voted first to go into union and then reversed its decision, was troubled chiefly over the same question. 'The new church claims that the Bible contains the word of God,' he said, 'but in effect does not say that it is supreme or a revelation. This could leave the way open for people to say some of the Bible was inspired and some not.'



Ivan Cox,



David Bartlett,

In sum, the more staunchly Evangelical the churches were, the less likely they were to go into union. It is interesting that while the Catholic Bishop of Wollongong sent a special message of goodwill

to the Uniting Church (*Cross Currents*, 21 July 1977), the Anglican Bishop, solidly Evangelical, made a point of encouraging members of the continuing Presbyterian Church on their stand.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was certainly strengthened by its decision to stay out of the union. While 900 gathered at the Town Hall on Sunday 26 June 1977 for the inaugural service of the Uniting Church, 500 gathered at St. Andrew's - a remarkable show of strength. Congregational conventions to plan for the church's life and mission were held in May and November 1977, and 'Evangelical sociology', or the science of Church growth, was avidly studied. Ivan Cox was Social Service Convener of the NSW Presbyterian Assembly, and under his dynamic leadership, the St. Andrew's Congregation purchased in 1979, without any government assistance, Olunda, a home for the elderly, and opened in 1982 Equity Housing, self-contained retirement homes.

Being outside the Uniting Church has created one interesting problem for St. Andrew's, however. The present minister, Jack Knapp, takes up to 7 funerals a week, as non-churchgoers who do not think of themselves as 'Uniting' seek Presbyterian burials for their relatives. While aiming to become Biblical churches for the faithful, Presbyterian churches are in some danger of becoming a social service for nominals.

5. THE ETHNIC CHURCHES - ORTHODOX, LUTHERAN & BAPTIST

Immigration, as we saw in the previous chapter, has dramatically expanded the religious pluralism of Illawarra. One consequence is that it is no longer correct to describe the Catholic Church in Illawarra as Roman Catholic. Among four Catholic ethnic churches in Illawarra, two - the Slovenians and Croations - use the Roman rite in their liturgy, while the Ukrainians use the Greek rite, and the Lebanese the Maronite rite.

The Orthodox Churches in Illawarra

Since World War II the fastest growing Christian denomination has been the Orthodox. In 1947 the Orthodox constituted 0.24% of the Australian population. By 1981 the percentage was 2.9. The

number of Orthodox in Wollongong rose from 81 in 1947 to 11,641 in 1981 or over 4% of the population. The Orthodox denomination is not only the fastest-growing; it is also the most turbulent. Church canon law requires that all the Orthodox in Australia should be under the one ruling bishop, but there are many jurisdictions including the Greek, Russian, Serbian, Anthiochian (Lebanese), Rumanian, and Bulgarian. Many of these groups exist for good cultural reasons, providing a focus of ethnic identity for migrants. In 1979 a step was taken towards inter-Orthodox unity by the formation of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Churches in Australia (SCOCCA). Still outside SCOCCA, however, are a number of self-governing churches. Indeed a chronic problem in the history of Australian Orthodoxy has been the unwillingness of churches, established by migrant communities, to accept the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the traditional head of the church since the fourth century.

In Wollongong there are seven Orthodox Churches. Four are represented by SCOCCA: Greek (Holy Cross Church); Lebanese



Greek Cultural Centre being opened in Stewart Street, Wollongong, by Archbishop Stylianos and Father Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Church, 1979.

Antioch (St. Elias), Russian (Holy Dormition of our Lady, Corrimal); Serbian (St. John the Baptist, Dapto). There are three self-governing churches: Free Serbian, Macedonian, and Ukrainian. Although the Greek Orthodox Church is the largest component of the Australian Orthodox Church, in Illawarra the Yugoslavs are the largest group, followed by the Greeks. There are also some 80 Lebanese families and a few Russians.



Ukrainian Catholic Bishop, Ivan Prisko, (right) blesses the first bricks laid at the Wollongong Ukrainian Catholic Church, 25 April 1977.

Serbiens, who are in communion with the the Serbian Patriarchate in Belgrade, have created the Parish of St. John the Baptist, Dapto, and have their own parish priest.

The Antiochian Orthodox number over 800 people, who settled here from the late 1950s. They formed the Parish of St. Elias and have recently erected their own church in Kenny Street, Wollongong. About 30 Russian Orthodox gather each week for choir practice at a private home in the Parish of the Dormition of our Lady

From the early 1950s visiting priests from Sydney held periodic services for the Orthodox, but it was not until July 1957 that Fr. Basil Christofis was appointed as the first Greek Orthodox priest resident in Wollongong. The liturgy for Fr. Basil's induction was celebrated by Theophylactous, Australia's third Greek Orthodox Archbishop, in Wesley Church. The Greek Orthodox Church of Holy Cross, in Stewart Street, Wollongong, was consecrated in 1962 and has served as a place of worship not only for Greeks, but for other ethnic Orthodox groups.

Although precise figures are not available, there seem to be at least twice as many Yugoslavs as Greeks among the Orthodox in Illawarra. Among them, the

in Corrimal. They are visited monthly by a priest to whom the choir, which includes one baritone and no tenor, sings liturgical responses. There can be no service without a choir - at least of one!

Orthodox doctrine and spirituality

The promise of enrichment to Australian culture by Orthodox people from so many different cultures is obvious, but Orthodox Christianity also has distinctive theological and spiritual insights to share with Catholics and Protestants.

First, Orthodoxy emphasises the universality and cosmic dimension of its mission in the world. The terms 'ecumenical' and 'cosmopolitan' are of Greek origin both as words and as ideas. The Orthodox church prays 'for the union of all' and offers the divine liturgy 'on behalf of all and for all'. The rich hymnody of the church abounds in references to the participation of the entire creation in prayer and worship. Through stressing what unites rather than what divides and presenting so fervent a hope for the unity of mankind in doctrine and liturgy, the Orthodox will certainly overcome the divisive effects of linguistic, cultural, and political differences which afflict their church in its migrant phase in Australia.



The Greek Orthodox Church of Holy Cross, Wollongong.

Second, Orthodoxy emphasises the unbroken and living tradition of the Church. 'People of tradition are not lost whatever the crisis', writes Stylianos, the present Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox church in Australia, to his pilgrim people. This is because they are always greater than what they appear to be. The living continuity of tradition is evidenced by the unceasing prayer of the Church, expressed in the unusually long services to which Orthodox Christians are accustomed. Yet, even the long services are considered to be but moments of experiencing, in the historical context of the world, the eternal prayer and worship of God by the communion of saints and angels in heaven.

Third, Orthodoxy emphasises the glory of persecution and martyrdom. Of all branches of the Christian Church, the Orthodox have been most persecuted, first in the Roman Empire, then during 400 years of Islamic subjection, and now by Communist oppression. In all cases the church has emerged with greater strength and deeper trust. After more than 60 years of State atheism, for example, the Orthodox church in Russia still claims 40 million members as against 16 million in the Communist Party.

Finally, Orthodoxy emphasises the holiness of all matter because Christ has embraced a human body and hallowed the entire creation. Icons, the most conspicuous feature of Orthodox churches, express potentially this redemption of the human person and the transfiguration of the fallen world. Icons are neither idols to be worshipped nor objects of art to be admired, but represent the truth that God is worshipped, not simply in an abstract or intellectual way, but also in a concrete manner by means of "Spirit-bearing matter in form, colour, and line".

These four prominent features of Orthodox spirituality - the total world-view of a united mankind, the living continuity with the entire past experience of the church, the glory of martyrdom and persecution, and the vivid expression of heavenly realities through icons - all combine to make the heavenly realm a tangible reality for God's pilgrim people. Further, they all help create an atmosphere of wonder, as well as a feeling of timelessness in eternity and a sense of continuity in history. The divine liturgy is the right time and place for Orthodox Christians to experience this reality of God's Kingdom. It is especially there and then that they will strengthen



Father Akiki, Rosemont Street
Lebanese Church.



Saso Spasevski retrieves the cross
thrown into the water to symbolise
Christ's baptism as part of the Epiphany
celebrations of the Macedonian Orth-
odox Church.

themselves with the necessary hope and joy to offer their whole lives in worship to God. (This section is based on a lecture, entitled 'The Orthodox Church in Australia', given by Fr. Miltiades Chrysavgis to the Religious Studies class at the University of Wollongong on 6 September 1983. See also, by the same author, 'Orthodoxy in Australia', in D. Harris, *et.al.*, *The Shape of Belief*, 1982, pp.95-108; and J. Vondra, *The History of the Greeks in Australia*, 1979, ch.6).

Lutheranism – 1960s and today

Illawarra Lutheranism peaked in the mid-1960s. In 1966 Australian Lutherans, divided since 1846 into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA), were united in the Australian Lutheran Church. By 1967, four pastors and two deaconesses served the Lutheran community through seven churches and chapels (Thirroul, Wollongong, Berkeley, Dapto, Warilla, Holy Cross, Oak Flats, and

St. Luke's, Oak Flats). Today there are only two pastors (Hofman at Wollongong and Oberscheidt at Oak Flats) and St. Luke's and the chapels at Thirroul and Warilla have been sold.

In 1980 St. John's church, Wollongong, had 170 confirmed members, and a contact list of about 1,000 from 20 nationalities. These figures are lower than those of the mid-60s as are the number of confirmations and baptisms. About 3,000 Illawarra Lutherans are today out of contact with their ancestral faith.



Pastor Hofman of the Wollongong Lutheran Church.

A number of reasons have been given to explain the loss of contact. First, immigration and resettlement are frequently all-absorbing traumas during which the church falls out of calculation. Second, many immigrants have been shift-workers whose hours militate against church attendance. Third, mixed marriages have tended to injure the religious beliefs of both partners since it is easier to ignore possible points of tension. Fourth, English-speaking children of migrant parents habitually absented themselves from services not in English. Fifth, migrant churches, through isolation, have a tendency to be more conservative than homeland churches

or churches in other denominations, reinforcing a ghetto mentality which the successful prefer to do without.

Today fewer than 50% of the congregation of Holy Cross church, Oak Flats, are first-generation migrants, and only about 20% are not fluent in English. It is no longer a 'migrant' church, let alone an 'ethnic' church. Illawarra Lutheranism is not so much in decline, as in that awkward phase of transition to an Australian church.

The Spanish Baptist Fellowship

It has been estimated recently that there are more Spanish-speaking Christians in the world (204 million) than English-speaking (196 million). Among the 6,000 Spanish-speaking people of Illawarra are some from Spain, but more from Chile and Argentina. Most are Catholics, and the main focus of Catholic work among Spanish migrants is the International Centre (see previous chapter) where a Spanish Mass is said each Sunday.

Protestants have found it more difficult to sustain work among predominantly Catholic migrants who do not speak English. The first of three independent attempts to establish a Spanish fellowship in Illawarra was made by Jim Hadfield in about 1965. He had served with the Andes Evangelical Fellowship in Bolivia and sought to minister to Spanish-speaking migrants in the Warilla area. The venture started well, but died out after only a year due to lack of leadership. Similarly unsuccessful were the initiatives of Gregory Blaxland, who had served with the South American Missionary Society, and was minister of St. John's Anglican Church, Keiraville, from 1966 to 1969. In 1974 an Argentinian Baptist pastor, William Hurry, began Spanish-speaking services in Dapto, Port Kembla, Warilla, and Wollongong, before finding a permanent home in the Wollongong Baptist Church.

On 28 February 1978 the group was officially recognised by the Baptist Union of NSW as a Spanish Fellowship. The pastorate of the Spanish Fellowship was then offered to Michael Corea. He accepted and began theological studies in 1979. The current pastor is the Rev. Luis Coronado, from Spain, who as early as 1968 had attempted to establish a ministry among migrants. Membership of the Fellowship is 30, with 80 adherents. Only about 10% of these are

employed, which means the group has little money to develop its work. The Fellowship now faces the challenge common among migrant Christian groups: whether to integrate with existing churches or to establish an independent Spanish Church. Among other Protestant initiatives for Spanish-speaking migrants is the counselling work of Doris Hernandez, a welfare worker, employed since 1979 by Care Force, a branch of the Anglican Home Mission Society.

6. THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT AND THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

Derived from the Greek word 'charisma' (gift), the adjective 'charismatic' has come to be applied to those Christians who claim to possess the 'extraordinary' supernatural gifts of God, especially speaking in tongues and divine healing. Sometimes the movement has become established in the churches of the mainstream denominations. Churches in Illawarra which have been influenced profoundly by the Charismatic movement have been as varied as Fairy Meadow Anglican Church in the 1970s under the Rev. Charles Widdowson, Wollongong Congregational Church, and Bulli Catholic Church. Few churches have been untouched by it, and probably most have had to make some adjustment to it.

Some Charismatics, feeling rejected or frustrated by the inadequacy of that adjustment, have joined the Pentecostal churches, which represent the institutionalisation of the movement. Pentecostals teach the necessity of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a distinct experience evidenced initially by speaking in tongues, and subsequently by holiness of life, increased love, power for witness, and further spiritual gifts. In Australia there are four major Pentecostal denominations: the Assemblies of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the Apostolic Church, and the Christian Revival Crusade. In Illawarra the last two have established large congregations and the Assemblies of God a smaller work.

The Apostolic Church grew out of the Welsh Revival of 1904/5. Its first service in Illawarra was held in January 1950 in a band hall in Keira Street. The preacher was Pastor Stillman from Newtown Apostolic Church. Home fellowship meetings were held at the home of William Goodwin of Wombarra from 1954. From 1961 the group met at the community hall in Warrawong, but there was no resident

manaster until 1968 when Pastor Harry Reah was appointed. Stephen Hollins, evangelist, was appointed in 1973. In two years membership jumped from 5 to 300. When he left in 1977 some of 'the froth and bubble' fell away, but membership today is a steady 250. A striking church building was opened in Berkeley in 1981. Known as the 'Illawarra Family Life Centre', it has two auditoriums, a creche, kitchen, administration area, and three Sunday school rooms.

The Christian Revival Crusade (CRC) traces its origins to New Zealand in 1944 when Leo Cecil Harris was told in a prophecy that his field of mission would extend over both New Zealand and Australia. On 1 February 1969 Pastor Bill Beard, from Campbelltown, held a meeting at the home of Mrs. Zeta Shield in Port Kembla. 'The Word was spoken in boldness,' reported Mrs. Shield, 'followed by a mighty moving of the Holy Spirit. At the conclusion of this meeting, almost simultaneously six people were baptised in the Holy Spirit and some healings had occurred.' With Pastor Beard settled among them, the growing congregation moved from the old Presbyterian Church, Rosemont Street, purchased in 1970, to the University Union Hall from 1973, to the present Lighthouse Christian Centre from 1977.



Rev. Charles Widdowson outside the Lighthouse.

Today 400 gather for worship each Sunday morning, and 250 in the evening. Two orchestras, comprising over 30 musicians, lead the singing on alternate Sundays. A segment of the service is in tongues, but if there is a message in tongues there must also be interpretation. The CRC has a primary school with 60 students and a Benevolent Society - Lighthouse Care - which has an Opportunity Shop in Crown Street, Wollongong. On the full-time staff of the CRC are three pastors, two office workers, three teachers and one teachers' aid.

A number of criticisms are commonly levelled at the Pentecostals. First, while they always affirm the truth of Scripture, they are not always clear about what that truth is. This is sometimes attributed to the thin theological training of their pastors. Second, they tend to exalt experience above Scripture as the arbiter of truth. It might be remarked that they are not alone in that. Since Wesley, as R. Knox observed, (in his classic work, *Enthusiasm*, 1950) all religion has been the religion of experience. Third, they are accused of sheep-stealing or building their congregations at the expense of those of the mainstream denominations. It does appear that about 50% of Pentecostal members are drawn from other churches. But it is surely laudable that 50% are not. Finally, Charismatics are accused of 'thoughtless zeal' in their propensity to disrupt and desert the congregations where they first learned about Christ. But what of the 'stubborn rejection' of those who remain? Adjustment to the Charismatic movement is still an item of unfinished business on the agenda of the Church. (On Pentecostalism, see B. Chant, *Heart of Fire: The Story of Australian Pentecostalism*, 2nd edition, 1975; B. Chant, 'The Promise of the Charismatic Movement, in D. Harris, et al., *The Shape of Belief*, 1982, pp.109-21).

PART IV

QUO VADIS?

CHAPTER 10

WOLLONGONG'S GREATEST CHALLENGE

1982 – 1984

TABLE OF EVENTS

1982 – 1984

1982

Donald Robinson appointed Anglican Archbishop of Sydney.

Harry Goodhew appointed Anglican Bishop of Wollongong.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Port Kembla, was sold to the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

February - Equity Housing opened (Presbyterian) - units for retired people.

3 February - Parent-controlled Christian School opened at Woonona Presbyterian Church.

14 March - Farmborough Grove Retirement Village opened (Uniting Church).

1983

February - Evangelism Explosion National Centre established in Wollongong.

30 October - New All Saints Anglican Church complex opened, Figtree.

29 October - Mary, Queen of the Croats, Croation Catholic Church opened, Figtree.

27 November - Slovenian Catholic Church of All Saints, Figtree, opened.

1984

1 January - Berkeley Anglican Provisional Parish created.

27 October - Salvation Army Illawarra Community and Social Service Centre opened (Auburn Street).

11 November - Wollongong Church of Christ expanded facilities opened.

In this, its sesquicentary, Wollongong faces its greatest ever challenge. In 1982 its steel heart almost stopped beating, and Illawarra's economy slid downhill with terrifying speed. Kemira Colliery retrenched 400 miners in October 1982, provoking a headline-grabbing sit-it. Wollongong's unemployment was then twice the national average. Since then over 2,200 jobs have been lost in mines in Illawarra and the Burragorang Valley. By early 1983 grim headlines shouted Wollongong's apparently terminal condition to a largely deaf, but also ailing, nation:

'BHP spells out the bitter truth - \$64.3m loss in steel division'

'BHP down \$11.7m as the slide continues'

By December 1983 there were 21,500 unemployed in Wollongong, that is, 20% of the workforce. In pockets Illawarra unemployment reached plague proportions: 33% in Warilla. The suicide rate in Illawarra increased 45% in the two years to the end of 1983, as against 10% in Sydney.

It is, of course, far too early to evaluate the impact of the recession on the churches or the impact of the churches on the recession. In this concluding chapter, three hopeful signs will be discussed briefly: church welfare agencies, the churches and evangelism; church growth.

1. THE CHURCHES AND WELFARE

Illawarra churches in the 1980s are far better equipped to assist the unemployed than they were in the Depression of the 1930s. The better-known agencies will be surveyed briefly, and interesting differences in their style of operation indicated. The agencies were quickly stretched to the limit by the onset of recession, and most have supplemented their services as needs have been identified.

The Anglican Home Mission Society (HMS)

Anglican welfare work in Wollongong has evolved rapidly in the sophistication of its work, the number of staff employed, and the number of people it helps. The work began in 1960 when St. Michael's curate, Russell Fowler, began visiting men kept overnight in Woll-

ongong's police cells. In 1964 the Diocese of Sydney purchased the old fire station near St. Michael's as a centre for diocesan activities. An opportunity shop was opened in the centre by HMS, which continued its court work and supported the Crossways Youth Drop-in Centre in the late '60s and its successor, the House of the Risen Son, in the early '70s.

In 1980 the work came under the auspices of Care Force, the welfare branch of HMS, and Peter Fisher was appointed co-ordinator. In 1984 Care Force has six full-time and two part-time staff, including a social worker and an unemployment resource worker, who has started an innovative work-generating enterprise in Warilla, Illawarra's unemployment black-spot.

To study the present philosophy and work of Care Force is to leave one with the impression that the days of paternalism in church welfare are numbered. The explicit aim of Care Force is 'not only to care for the deprived, but to examine the causes of deprivation and disadvantage and to remove them'. Another aim is 'to research, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning social policy which reflect the Christian principles of social justice'. With these twin aims in view, Wollongong Care Force is about to appoint a parish liaison worker who will be responsible for educational programmes relating to social issues.



Peter Fisher of Care Force.

In 1979, 1,816 people were helped by HMS. In 1984 Care Force helps almost that number every month (1,629 in April, 1,579 in August). This ten-fold increase in work reflects both the seriousness of Wollongong's recession and the greatly expanded resources of Care Force in Wollongong. The range of problems presented to Care Force counsellors, and the relative size of each problem, is shown below.

TABLE XIV

**PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY CALLERS AT CARE FORCE
(APRIL 1984)**

	Number	%
Alcohol addiction	29	1.78
Budget	64	3.93
Children	119	7.31
Drug addiction	4	.25
Depression	84	5.16
Family	124	7.61
Financial	195	11.97
Housing	65	3.99
Health - Physical	131	8.04
- Mental	54	3.31
Information	89	5.46
Isolation	66	4.05
Language	1	.06
Legal	40	2.46
Material	348	21.36
Marriage	80	4.91
Personal	45	2.76
Relationship	72	4.42
Sexual	10	.61
Other	9	.55
TOTAL	1629	100.00

Life Line

Established in Wollongong in 1969, Life Line now chaired by Wesley minister, Clyde Dominish, has not received a dramatic increase in the number of calls for help since the onset of recession, probably because the organisation does not supply material aid.

On the other hand, Wesley Church's provision of food parcels and free lunches has increased dramatically since 1980 when the service was first introduced. Something of the impact of the recession on marriages is reflected in the rapidly growing number of appointments

for counselling at UNIFAM also established by the Uniting Church in 1980.

TABLE XV

CALLS TO LIFE LINE, WOLLONGONG, 1969 TO 1984
(years run from 1 March to end February)

Year	No. of Calls	Year	No of Calls
1969/70	757	1977/78	3457
1970/71	1517	1978/79	4221
1971/72	1547	1979/80	6005
1972/73	2005	1980/81	6609
1973/74	1922	1981/82	7330
1974/75	1901	1982/83	6792
1975/76	1857	1983/84	6926
1976/77	2490	1984 to end Aug.	3600



Clyde Dominish helping with the giant community Christmas dinner, 1983.

TABLE XVI

**APPOINTMENTS WITH UNIFAM
(UNITING CHURCH MARRIAGE GUIDANCE) 1980 – 1984**

1980/81 – 324	1982/83 – 623
1981/82 – 529	1983/84 – 858
1984 (March – August) – 488	

The St. Vincent de Paul Society

Everywhere a Catholic church exists in Illawarra, there is a branch (conference) of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which was started in Australia in 1881. It was established in Wollongong in the 1920s under the leadership of Mr. T.P. Britton. He was 'one of the best men I ever met', said Wollongong celebrity, Sid Hayes, who has, himself, served the Society for over 50 years.

The Society, which runs a hostel for homeless men and organises visits to homes and hospitals, insists on not seeking publicity for its work. Men, visiting in pairs to avoid scandal, see people in their own homes and are thus able to assess the real need and how best to meet it. Visitors leave an order form which enables the family to call at the nearest centre for food and clothing. The store is so organised that the better clothes and furniture are kept for those who have orders. Currently, the Wollongong conference provides 30 to 40 people with free lunches each week day. On Thursday nights 50 people are given a three-course meal.

Salvation Army

In the last decade, the Salvation Army has dramatically expanded its facilities by the opening of four new complexes:

1975	Port Kembla	\$130,000
1978	Woonona	\$106,000
1980	Wollongong	\$271,000
1981	Tarrawanna	\$220,000

During the years 1978 to 1983, the Salvation Army was given inspiring leadership by Major Errol Woodbury. An experience of

Major Woodbury during his Wollongong ministry encapsulates the never-changing task of the Church in times of adversity, which, as we have seen, have been all too frequent in the history of Illawarra. On 24 July, 1979, an explosion in the Appin Colliery killed 15 men, the region's third-worst mine disaster. The Salvation Army set up a canteen at the pit top and served coffee throughout the long day as teams from the Mines Rescue Station at Bellambi worked to make the mine sufficiently safe to bring bodies to the surface. Two relatives of victims went to the canteen to talk. One of them suddenly blurted out to Major Woodbury, 'They have been telling us all day that we'll be O.K. financially. Will you pray with us?' Afterwards, the Major went to the homes of victims and asked relatives 'Can I pray with you?' His question everywhere met with grateful acceptance. Basic to the philosophy of all Christian welfare agencies is the belief that man does not live by coffee alone.

Before 1983, each Corps of the Salvation Army in Illawarra was responsible for its own welfare work. Convinced that more could be done to help the unemployed, the Salvation Army in January 1983 appointed Major Hilton and Joyce Harner as Social Services Development Officers, with responsibility for the Army's entire social welfare programme from Helensburgh to Kiama. Their whole plant was a double garage, full of clothes, with office attached. On 4 March 1983 the Salvation Army Welfare Centre was opened in Charlotte Street. It received 9,901 callers to 30 June 1984. To process the needs of these callers the Army spent \$134,000, of which \$117,000 came from the sale of clothing and furniture at the Centre, and \$17,000 came from the Red Shield appeal in Sydney.

To meet the varying needs of callers, the Centre has appointed a number of associates, who are experts in such fields as law, gynaecology, real estate, auctioneering, and hair-dressing. The last is explained by the fact that the first aim of the Centre is to increase self-esteem which is always helped by a good haircut. Staff have been added almost monthly to cope with the burgeoning work. Though capacious, the Charlotte Street Welfare Centre proved too small, and premises almost four times as large have been obtained in Auburn Street. Opened on 27 October 1984, it is known as the Salvation Army Illawarra Community and Social Services Centre.



Salvation Army Officer and 3-year-old Lebanese refugee, Maria.



Major Errol Woodbury (Salvation Army) Rev. Jack Knapp (Presbyterian) and Bishop Harry Goodhew (Anglican).

For Christmas 1983 the Salvation Army distributed 490 food parcels and toys for 900 children. Clients received an invitation to a special Christmas Party. Over 500 turned up, and from these, children were recruited to attend a camp at Collaroy for the underprivileged. In March 1984 an 8-bed women's hostel, and in August a 12-bed youth hostel, were opened. A prison ministry was also commenced in August. Major Harmer or members of his staff visit the cells at 7.30 each morning offering help to all who have been arrested. Dedications (Christenings) of children and weddings are regular events at the Welfare Centre.

When Major Harmer arrived in January 1983 and saw that double garage, he said, 'My God, what have you sent me to?' Today, as he arrives at the Centre, sometimes at 4 a.m. to begin a 17-hour day, he says, 'God, this is your miracle'.

2. EVANGELISM

Among hopeful signs for the Church today is the growing awareness that ministry is the task of all the faithful, and that evangelism is not the exclusive responsibility of charismatic revivalists such as Billy Graham. Churches are today relying less on the inter-denominational regional evangelistic mission, and more on the human resources of each Christian congregation. Accompanying this change of strategy is the realisation that while all Christians are called to witness, not all are equipped to evangelise. Evangelism is an acquired skill, requiring training.

Wollongong, since February 1983, has been the national headquarters of Evangelism Explosion (EE), an organisation devoted to training church members for effective evangelism. The organisation began in 1960 at Fort Lauderdale in Florida, USA, and grew out of the disillusionment of James Kennedy, a Presbyterian minister. His small congregation of 45 shrunk to 17 in spite of his best efforts at preaching. It dawned on him that, although he was a Christian minister, he had no idea how to do personal evangelism. He accompanied a fellow minister on evangelism visitations to homes. He learned how it was done and lost his fear. Then he taught others how to do it, and finally he taught others how to teach others to do it. The multiplier effects on his congregation were staggering: it grew from 17 to 3,000 in just five years.

In 1974 Harry Goodhew, then rector of St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Coorparoo, Brisbane, and now Bishop of Wollongong, met Dr. Kennedy at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation. On returning to Australia, the Rev. Goodhew sent a member of his staff, Rod Story, to Fort Lauderdale where he attended a Leadership Clinic. Through such visits the work was introduced to Australia. In 1977, Reg Hanlon, the rector of St. Mark's Anglican Church, West Wollongong, implemented EE at St. Mark's. Leadership clinics have been held each year since then at St. Mark's and 229 people have been trained as EE leaders. In February 1983 a National Centre for the ministry was established in Wollongong, and Rod Story was appointed first National Executive Director. Today throughout Australia over 300 churches use the system to train lay people. In Illawarra, over 60% of Anglican churches and some churches from other denominations are utilising EE. Some Catholic clergy have attended leadership clinics, though none is known to be using EE in Illawarra. Some Christians testify that involvement in EE has transformed them: it has meant both realising that God wants to use them as evangelists and learning how to share the Gospel.

3. CHURCH GROWTH

Some local Christian congregations have stared recession in the face with the defiant, joyful faith that their God is greater than the steelworks. On Saturday 29 October the \$1 million Catholic Church of Mary, Queen of the Croats, was opened in Figtree for the Croatian community. Bishop Cyril Kos of Croatia attended the ceremony, during which a relic of the recently-canonised Croatian Saint Leopold Mandic was placed in the altar.

The next day, also in Figtree, Bishop Goodhew opened the new All Saints Anglican Church, a \$600,000 complex. In his address, the Bishop dwelt on all that the new church symbolised: situated between a school and a hospital it symbolised the central role of the church in society; its roof line, reproducing the configuration of the Illawarra escarpment symbolised the church's role in Illawarra; and its distinctive Australian architecture of exposed timber and brick, symbolised the church's task to communicate the Gospel to Australians. He addressed the congregation as 'ordinary men and women who have touched and been touched by the power of heaven' and he encouraged them to be 'living symbols of their great Lord and master Jesus Christ'.



Bishop Cyril Kos of Croatia, Monsignor Vldimir Stankovic of Rome, and Bishop Murray of Wollongong (right) at the blessing of Mary, Queen of the Croats Church, Figtree (1983).



All Saints Anglican Church Figtree.



Fr. Carl Bozic (left) and Fr. Jozc Omieck from Slovenia at the official opening of the Slovenian Catholic Church, Figtree.

It is significant that the Anglican parishioners of Figtree finished first the worship part of their new complex. A similar decision was made by the Slovenian community who purchased the old Anglican church in Figtree. Some of their number, influenced by the materialism of Marxist thought, believed that a club would be of greater utility to their members than a church. But they were over-ruled by the majority, and the Slovenian Catholic Church of All Saints, Figtree, was solemnly blessed by Bishop Murray on 27 November 1983.

Among other fast-growing Illawarra churches is Wollongong

Church of Christ. Its minister, Barry McMurtrie, is one of Australia's leading practitioners of 'church growth theory'. Membership has increased from 110 in 1979 to 350 today. Sunday attendance averaged 90 in 1979. Today it ranges between 450 and 500. On 24 May 1981 the congregation moved out of its old church and into its enormous hall converted to a Worship Centre. On 11 November 1984 expanded facilities were opened to accommodate the needs of the growing congregation. Mr. McMurtrie advertises his church's product as 'uncluttered Christianity'. Members are not diverted from their primary task of living and loving for Christ in the world by arguments over irrelevant traditions, and hence they constitute an actionary rather than a reactionary church. The Church of Christ, though using EE, is not primarily committed to growth through evangelism; its commitment is to growth through the body life of the church, and especially in the joyful, relaxed worship services many people find fulfilment through the exercise of their gifts.

The Church of Christ attracts many people who are not regular churchgoers. Its success in reaching the unchurched is a sign that there is no reason why churches cannot grow in Australia today.

Many Illawarra Christians, however, long not only for numerical growth but for a sharpening of the Church's understanding of its prophetic role in society, so that the resources of the people of God will be put at the disposal of a region, the future of which is unknown. In the past, each new phase in Illawarra's development - pastoral, mining, steel - opened ever greater vistas. But the basis for a new phase of development is not now apparent. From the resources of the Christian faith comes the impetus to hope and renewed motivation. 'This awful catastrophe,' wrote St. Augustine of the collapse of the Roman Empire, 'is not the end but the beginning. History does not end so. This is the way its chapters open.'



Barry McMurtrie and Gordon Moyes (right).

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Minimal bibliographical references have been given in the text, primarily to newspaper and secondary sources. Apart from those, this study has been based on material which is not readily available. The utility of such a list, since it would have to be so long, would hardly justify the cost of printing. Over 70 histories - ranging in quality and in length from 1 to 84 pages have been written of local churches. Most of these may be consulted in the Wollongong University Archives. The Illawarra Historical Society has produced a copious store of relevant material which can be consulted in the Wollongong Public Library. The records of churches are kept either at the churches themselves, in archives in Sydney, or, as in the case of the Wollongong Congregational Church, at the Wollongong Public Library. Student essays on local churches have been very useful to me, since the students addressed themselves to questions which we all thought important, unlike the typical parish histories which are chronicles. The honours theses of Phyllis Tibbs (on Methodism) and Susan Westwood (on Anglicanism in World War I) have been especially valuable, as has the master's thesis of David Duchesne, *The Frontier Church and Society in Illawarra*, Sydney University, 1980.

ILLAWARRA (MILLENBURGH TO MULLADILL) REGION OF INHABITANTS AT CENSUSES, 1828 - 1981

RELIGION	CENSUS YEARS																		
	1828	1841	1846	1851	1856	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1921	1931	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981
Church of England																			
Catholic	124	1266	1432	1927	3244	4382	4369	4356	5882	8971	10518	15781	26191	44879	55531	67787	65316	73140	
Presbyterian	15	624	743	1048	2214	2665	3419	3165	3176	5312	6749	7986	11747	15363	17040	17964	18052	18621	
Methodist	113	171	171	373	1547	1979	2341	2378	3609	5692	6359	8832	11713	14316	16226	16966	15788	9110	
Congregationalist					1000	223	493	621	829	739	693	649	705	963	1079	1139	973		
Uniting																			9137
Baptist						65		54	68	316	486	902	1122	1672	1943	2167	2199	2494	
Salvation Army								154	212	306	245	435	568	897	969	1276	1318	1668	
Lutheran								46	36	27	22	46	631	2827	2920	5215	2803	2694	
Orthodox													1300	3306	5963	7644	9566	31722	
Church of Christ										61	37	208	315	454	694	792	780	781	
Seventh Day Adventist										47	48	807	363	323	313	343	313	377	
Brethren											77	76	118	134		163	163	166	
Presbyterian																			646
Christian Scientist												46	140						1069
Jehovah's Witnesses																			888
Mormon																			817
Protestant unspecified	214	28	28	74	153	286	53	51		300	315	517	937	1883	1265	2987	2573	1732	
Christian unspecified										215	97	270	814	1509	2051	2336	2949	2002	
Other Religion	1	19	13	14	38	31	53	64	56	69	57	58	113	170	306	718	1714	2978	
No religion - religious not shown	25		2	13	31	81	84	276	350	849	7085	8684	10867	19002	21352	24489	44995	46070	

ILLAWARRA (HELENSBURGH TO ULLADULLA) RELIGION OF INHABITANTS AT CENSUSES, 1828 - 1981 (PERCENTAGES)

RELIGION	CENSUS YEARS														1976	1981		
	1828	1841	1846	1851	1856	1861	1871	1881	1901	1921	1931	1947	1954	1961			1966	1971
Church of England		48.9	43.4	44.0	41.0	37.4	37.4	43.2	40.0	47.8	42.7	42.6	42.5	37.0	36.3	35.4	31.7	30.8
Catholic	32.7	31.4	35.8	30.1	27.5	28.9	28.4	26.2	24.5	20.2	18.2	20.0	22.4	26.3	27.7	28.0	29.0	26.7
Presbyterian	4.0	15.6	17.6	17.2	18.8	16.8	15.0	14.0	12.2	12.4	11.9	10.1	10.0	9.1	8.3	7.9	4.4	5.1
Methodist		3.3	4.1	6.1	9.9	12.8	14.5	15.4	13.0	12.8	11.2	11.2	9.9	8.8	8.1	7.5	6.4	3.4
Congregationalist					0.8	1.6	3.1	4.1	2.4	1.7	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	
Uniting																		2.4
Baptist							0.4	0.3	0.3	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9
Salvation Army								1.0	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6
Lutheran								0.3	0.1	0.1		0.1	0.6	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.0
Orthodox													1.1	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.9	4.4
Church of Christ										0.1		0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Seventh Day Adventist										0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Buddhist											0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Particularist																	0.3	0.4
Christian Scientist											0.1	0.2				0.4	0.3	0.4
African's Bazaar																		0.2
Mormon																		1.0
Protestant unspecified	36.3	6.7	6.7	1.2	1.3	1.7	0.3	0.3		0.7	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.6	1.3	1.0	1.0
Christian unspecified								0.5	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.1
Other Religion	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7
No religion - religion not shown	4.4			0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.9	12.4	11.0	9.3	11.1	10.6	10.6	10.1	10.3

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Wollongong

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Bulli
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Bulli
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Bulli

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Australian Iron and Steel, Port Kembla



See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace!
Jesu's love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.
To bring fire on earth He came;
Kindled in some hearts it is
O that all might catch the flame,
All partake the glorious bliss!

Charles Wesley, 1749

The imagery was suggested by furnace fires
in the Newcastle coalfields, England.